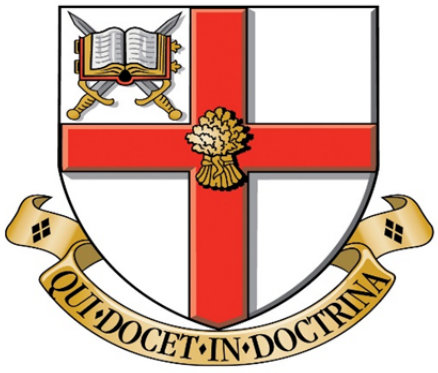


University of Chester

# The Gaze and Subjectivity in *Fin de Siècle* Gothic Fiction

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

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# Contents

# Preface

First of all, I would like to thank Dr. Brian Baker for his excellent supervision, notably his stimulating feedback and judicious advice, but also his unwavering enthusiasm for the project more generally. I am also grateful to Professor David Seed for his continued support and formative assistance. I would like to thank my parents, Michael and Christine Foster, to whom this thesis is dedicated, for their total love and support. Finally, I am indebted to Katy, whose intellectual and emotional generosity, as well as practical assistance, ensured the successful completion of my thesis.

# List of Abbreviations

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| *Dorian Gray* | *The Picture of Dorian Gray* |
| *Jekyll and Hyde* | *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* |
| *Moreau* | *The Island of Doctor Moreau* |
| *EJH* | *Journal of English Literary History* |
| *OED* | *Oxford English Dictionary* |

# Introduction

My thesis is concerned with the importance of the gaze in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. One of the ways in which the importance of the gaze manifests itself is in the central role of the onlooker like Enfield, Utterson or Lanyon in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Prendick in H. G. Wells's *Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), or Harker in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). As their appellation suggests, Wells's Beast Men confound the distinction between the human and the animal, which is also the case with 'Beast Men' like Hyde and Dracula. According to Fred Botting,

> Darwin's theories, by bringing humanity closer to the animal kingdom, undermined the superiority and privilege humankind had bestowed on itself. Along similar lines, the work of criminologists like Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau attempted to discriminate between humans: some were more primitive and bestial in their nature than others. [...] The fiction of the period is dominated by marked descriptions of facial features as telling signs of character.[1]

A central concern of my thesis is the perceptual drama that is involved in looking at the spectacle of the monstrous body, for example, as the onlooker struggles to get to grips with the challenge to representation posed by these 'Beast Men'. As Rosemary Jackson notes in her discussion of fantastic literature but which is especially applicable to *fin-de-siècle* Gothic, 'objects are not readily appropriated through the look: things slide away from the powerful eye/I which seeks to possess them, thus becoming distorted, disintegrated, partial and lapsing into invisibility'.[2] Whilst I acknowledge the importance of reading the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic in the context of evolution and degeneration, I account for the centrality of the

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[1] Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 137. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[2] Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), p. 46. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

gaze by contextualising *fin-de-siècle* Gothic in terms of visual modernity and anxieties of specularity. Before coming to that, I want to consider the term 'the gaze' more closely.

We can link the term 'the gaze' back to Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', published in 1975. 'This essay', as Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright note, 'used psychoanalysis to propose that the conventions of popular narrative cinema are structured by a patriarchal unconscious, positioning women represented in film as objects of a "male gaze"'.[3] According to Mulvey, classical Hollywood cinema constructs the cinema spectator as the desiring male, whilst objectifying women through their representation as passive ideals and things of erotic fantasies. Mulvey uses terms such as 'scocophilia' (pleasure in looking) and 'voyeurism' (pleasure in looking without being seen) to describe the visual pleasure of cinema spectatorship.[4] In addition to this 'projection of repressed desire onto the performer', there is also a recognition of likeness with the glamorous and active male protagonist (p.114). In this part of her article, Mulvey refers to Lacan's description of the 'mirror stage', in which a young child first recognises its own image in the mirror, crucial in the formation of ego:

> The mirror phase occurs at a time when children's physical ambitions outstrip their motor capacity, with the result that their recognition of themselves is joyous in that they imagine their mirror image to be more complete, more perfect than they experience in their own body. Recognition is thus overlaid with misrecognition: the image recognised is conceived as the reflected body of the self, but its misrecognition as superior projects this body outside itself as an ideal ego, the alienated subject which, reintrojected as an ideal ego, prepares the way for identification with others in the future. (p.115)

According to Mulvey, this awareness of a self through a misrecognition and identification

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[3] Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 76.
[4] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975), in Antony Easthope (ed.), *Contemporary Film Theory* (London and New York: Longman, 1993), pp. 111-124 (p. 114). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

with a mirror image is played out in the cinematic experience of identification with the image on the screen, though this works in tension with the 'voyeuristic separation' involved in the sexual desire evoked through looking. Popular narrative cinema is structured to support the patriarchal order in which woman's place is 'as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning' (p.112). Furthermore, 'conventional close-ups of legs (Dietrich, for instance) or a face (Garbo) integrate into the narrative a different mode of eroticism' (p.117). This idea of the fragmentation of the female body is useful to the extent that it is applicable to two of the texts to be discussed, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894). The gaze breaks the body into fetishised pieces: for example, as Trilby's ankle becomes the object of male scrutiny and deliberation. Pamela Thurschwell writes:

> Trilby's large size and her powerful singing lungs [...] puts into play a fear of overwhelming femininity that is dealt with in the novel by literally pulling Trilby apart – her feet are anatomized in the pictures; her voice is literally stolen by the evil hypnotizing Svengali who also gets a sexual thrill out of imagining Trilby's dead and dissected body.[5]

According to Thurschwell, Trilby's 'overwhelming femininity' is diminished by the novel's dissection of her into fragmented parts, just as the threat of the woman as symbolising castration is controlled through her portrayal as erotic object (Mulvey, p.116). In *Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry's initial visual appraisal of Dorian, 'with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair', compartmentalises the facial features of the young man like close-up shots of the erotic object.[6] On the one hand, Lord Henry's gaze seems to prefigure the male gaze of cinema spectatorship. On the other hand, the male Dorian is the object of Lord Henry's sexualised gaze and, while not a cinematic example, it

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[5] Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology and Magical Thinking 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 51. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[6] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), ed. by Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 19. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

points to a limitation in Mulvey's argument. As Daniel Chandler summarises,

> A key objection underlying many critical responses has been that Mulvey's argument in this paper was (or seemed to be) *essentialist*: that is, it tended to treat both spectatorship and maleness as homogeneous essences – as if there were only one kind of spectator (male) and one kind of masculinity (heterosexual).[7]

I tend to use the term 'the gaze' in a less theoretical and more literal sense than in film theory, unless stated: for example, I refer to Foucault below. Nonetheless, I incorporate Mulvey here to show an awareness of the weight the term carries. At the same time, although it should be made clear that I am not proposing a psychoanalytical reading of *fin-de-siècle* Gothic, Lacan's mirror stage is useful for drawing attention to the relationship between the gaze and subjectivity in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic: for example, when Dorian first sees his completed portrait, 'he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time' (p.27). Thus, the second way in which the importance of the gaze manifests itself in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic is in terms of the spectacle of the self.

'A fear haunted the latter half of the eighteenth century', observes Foucault in 'The Eye of Power': 'the fear of darkened spaces, of the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths', and which it was the role of the French Revolution to dispel.[8] Foucault illustrates his argument with reference to the contemporary emergence of the Gothic, 'a whole fantasy-world of stone walls, darkness, hideouts and dungeons [...] and forests, caves, ruined castles and terrifyingly dark and silent convents', whose 'imaginary spaces are like the negatives of the transparency and visibility which [the

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[7] Daniel Chandler, 'Notes on "The Gaze": Laura Mulvey on film spectatorship' <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/gaze/gaze09.html>, [accessed 21 March 2005], para 5.

[8] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon 1980), p. 153. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

Revolution] aimed to establish' (p.154). While the Gothic never disappears altogether, it clearly undergoes a revival towards the end of the nineteenth century, 'the result of a complex matrix of factors', as Roger Luckhurst has noted.[9] I want to suggest that this resurgence of the Gothic in the form that it takes, in particular, in terms of this emphasis upon the gaze, can be explained by contextualising it in terms of what Kate Flint refers to in *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (2000) as 'the power of the specular' – the making visible of the 'darkened spaces' of the human mind and body, and the city – and the development of a new visual culture.[10] By the late nineteenth century, there is the rise of cinema, which I shall consider more closely by way of conclusion to my introduction. The city also becomes a spectacle in itself (the *flâneur*) and shopping arcade and advertising are common cultural artefacts; so the idea of the 'attraction', of stimulation and 'shock', is a dominant mode of urban experience. Discourses of science and medicine are opening up the human body. The laboratory in which Jekyll performs his chemical experiments is a former dissecting theatre. Instead of opening up the body, Jekyll mines the human psyche, albeit in an extraordinarily material way as the 'transcendental' scientist swaps one suit of flesh for another.[11] In *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (1949), Ralph Tymms notes the similarity between Stevenson's thematic treatment of identity and 'the alternation of the personality' that contemporary French psychiatrists

> were studying anew from the point of view of the underlying complexity of consciousness. Working on the lines originally established by the early discoveries of 'animal magnetism', the French investigators of hypnotic and hysterical states – Azam, Charcot, Bernheim, Janet and others – were advancing towards a more specific conception of the different 'layers' of consciousness

[9] Roger Luckhurst (ed.), *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2005), p. x.
[10] Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[11] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), ed. by Martin A. Danahay (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1999), p. 74. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

from which seemingly different personalities emanated.[12]

I shall consider hypnotism more closely in the discussion of the hypnotic power of the *fin-de-siècle* villain in Chapter Five. As far as Jekyll is concerned, it is an irony that he brings Hyde to the surface for the purpose of self-concealment. Governed by a strict code of respectability and the fear of scandal, the social world of the novella is one of secrecy, silence and cover-ups; to that extent, Hyde is very much a product or reflection of Jekyll's community.

In addition to the body being opened up and light shed on the mind, under the influence of Cesare Lombroso, criminality becomes inflected with science and the discourses of atavism and degeneration, with the result that the criminal becomes more visible, particularly in the police 'mug shot' and 'rogue's gallery'. The late-Victorian investment in the gaze is also reflected in the urban exploration of figures like George Sims and Charles Booth, who sought to make visible 'Darkest London'. The point is that looking, the gaze, surveillance, voyeurism, are all mixed up, very potent undercurrents towards the end of the nineteenth century. In her discussion of 'the power of the specular', Flint cautions against 'falling into the trap of believing that Victorians necessarily privileged the importance of visibility': for example, 'the unseen could be far more suggestive than the seen' (p.22). Of course, the greater suggestiveness of the unseen need not be an argument against the importance of visibility: the unseen may precisely grow in suggestiveness or power as the visible becomes the cultural dominant. In fact, my idea is that with this drive towards specularity, the unseen becomes not only increasingly

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[12] Ralph Tymms, *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1949), pp. 92-94. Also, see Robert Mighall, 'Diagnosing Jekyll: The Scientific Context to Dr Jekyll's Experiment and Mr Hyde's Embodiment', in Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. by Robert Mighall (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 145-161.

suggestive but also a source of anxiety in its potential resistance to visibility; anxiety that partly manifests itself in the 'darkened spaces' of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic, Radcliffean landscapes having largely given way to a contemporary urban and domestic setting. As Glennis Byron notes with reference to London, 'The city, centre of the British empire, was the key site of 1890s Gothic monstrosity'.[13] Many of the central themes and motifs of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic – the eye, the face, the window, the mirror (in which Jekyll looks at himself but Dracula cannot be seen), the hidden and so forth – point both to the centrality of the gaze and the 'problems of vision and visibility' Rosemary Jackson suggests is an attribute of fantastic literature more generally, but which I am suggesting is especially characteristic of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic (p.43). As we shall see, Hyde is simultaneously characterised by his Lombroso-like classification as 'troglodytic' and the fact that he is beyond representation.

In 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', published in 1903, Georg Simmel describes how the city dweller is overwhelmed by 'the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions'.[14] Critics like Vanessa Schwartz have noted that these 'words could serve as a description of the cinema; the experience of the city set the terms for the experience of other elements of modernity'.[15] In his discussion of early responses to the cinematograph in *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (2004), Nicholas Daly refers 'to the extensive set of late Victorian tales that dwell on the existence of "dead" things that have a

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[13] Glennis Byron, 'Gothic in the 1890s', in David Punter (ed.), *A Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 134. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[14] Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Vanessa R. Schwatz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski (eds), *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 51.
[15] Vanessa R. Schwartz, 'Walter Benjamin for Historians', *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/106.5/ah0501001721.html > [accessed 29 November 2005], para. 30.

life of their own – vampires, mummies, portraits', and suggests that 'it is tempting to speculate that the appearance of those tales in or around 1895 is not a coincidence'.[16] In other words, Gothic entities like the living portrait in *Dorian Gray*, or Stoker's 'undead' vampire, confound the distinction between life and death, and in so doing prefigure or resemble the uncanny cinematic body. Indeed, the memorial nature of film subsequently theorised by André Bazin in his essay 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image' was quickly recognised: 'When these gadgets are in the hands of the public', ran the report of the Lumière Cinématographe premier in *La Poste*, 'then death will no longer be final'.[17] This drive to overcome mortality informs Dorian's wish: 'If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! [...] I would give my soul for that!' (p.28). *Fin-de-siècle* Gothic and the birth of cinema are contemporaneous because they are partly produced by, or responses to, the same cultural forces, making cinema 'Gothic' and, more importantly for our discussion, making *fin-de-siècle* Gothic 'cinematic'.[18] Something similar can be said of *Dorian Gray*. A parallel can be identified between Dorian's picture and early cinematic technology, as the novel taps into those undercurrents that contribute to the ensuing '"Living Picture" craze' (Coe, p.76). Deborah Parsons discusses the role optics played in the developing commercial culture of the nineteenth century:

> The interest in optics itself became a commodity as entertainment became increasingly aligned with spectacle, resulting in leisure activities such as panoramas and dioramas, 'toys' such as the kaleidoscope and the stereoscope, the growth of the tourist industry and the development of large, spectacular department stores.[19]

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[16] Nicholas Daly, *Literature, Technology, and Modernity, 1860-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 60.

[17] Quoted in 'Méliès and Early Films', Part Two of *Méliès: Inspirations and Illusions*, The Missing Link, <www.mshepley.btinternet.co.uk/melies2.htm> [Last accessed 22 February 2007].

[18] For a discussion of the Gothic nature of cinema, see Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 87-88.

[19] Deborah L Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford University

Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'* (1992) reminds the viewer that this visual culture culminates with the birth of cinema at the turn of the century. In a key scene from the film, Dracula visits the cinematograph upon his arrival in London. Stoker, of course, does not mention Dracula visiting the cinematograph and strictly speaking, the reader ought not to imagine him so doing, if, as Clive Leatherdale points out, the novel is set in 1893.[20] Thomas Edison's Kinetoscope, a peepshow machine, premiered in October 1894, while Robert Paul's Theatrograph and the Cinématographe-Lumière were first exhibited in February 1896.[21] *Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'* makes the addition of the cinematograph plausible by shifting the setting to 1897, the year of the novel's publication. *Dracula* readily lends itself to Coppola's early cinematic adaptation on account of the illusory quality of Stoker's vampire. As Botting notes in 'Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era' with reference to Wood, 'Early cinema had its conjurors: George Méliès was described as "king of fantasmagoria" and "magician of the screen"'.[22] Dracula is also a magician of sorts: he shifts shape and vanishes into thin air, orchestrates howling wolves and conjures armies of rats, and is endowed with hypnotic power. The magic theatre is the spiritual home of the vampire as much as hell, 'A world Stoker would have been happy to acknowledge, a world to which he would have been granted access through his long

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Press, 2000), p. 21. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[20] Bram Stoker, *Bram Stoker's Dracula Unearthed*, ed. by Clive Leatherdale (Desert Island Books: Westcliff-on-Sea, 1998), p. 24. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[21] For a discussion of English early cinema, see John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England* (David & Charles: London, 1976). If the cinematograph is at odds with the titular claim of the film, it could be argued that its addition is in tune with the modern technological thrust of the novel: the emphasis on advances like the telegraph, the typewriter and the phonograph.

[22] Fred Botting, 'Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era: Reading Machines', *Romantic Circles Praxis Series*, <http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/ gothic/botting/botting.html> [accessed 10 March 2007], para. 13.

association with Henry Irving', according to Iain Sinclair.[23]

The thesis is divided into five chapters. While my interest in the issue of the perceptual drama that characterises looking starts from the outset, the emphasis upon the gaze increases as the thesis develops. Chapter One considers *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Moreau attempts to speed up the evolutionary process, to make men from beasts and I start by looking at Prendick's struggle to get to grips with the sight of the monstrous islanders, before looking at the issue of Moreau's imperfect science and the consequent necessity of 'the Law', which he cruelly enforces. Contrasting the Law with Kipling's 'Law of the Jungle', I read both authors' work in the context of colonialism. Of particular concern is the way in which violence is the supplement of 'law'. I conclude with a discussion of Conrad's treatment of colonialism in *Heart of Darkness* (1902).

Chapter Two focuses on the gaze, subjectivity and bodily identity in *Jekyll and Hyde*. Prior to Hyde, Jekyll leads a double existence, concealing his pleasures not on account of their excessive nature but because of the code of propriety he so strictly adheres to. The creation of Hyde merely marks an extension of his divided life-style. My discussion begins with the perceptual drama that characterises looking in the novel, in part, because of the challenge Hyde poses to representation. Hyde produces a reaction of disgust in the viewer and arouses their curiosity at the same time; curiosity that is to be considered in the context of the Gothic more generally. The second section of the chapter concerns the issue of subjectivity and bodily identity in relation to Jekyll-Hyde. The text throws up a number of different models of subjectivity but I suggest that Hyde is the biological entity underlying the conscious subject, before concluding with some thoughts on the cultural

[23] Iain Sinclair, 'Invasion of the Blood', in Ginette Vincendeau (ed.), *Film/Literature/Heritage: A Sight and Sound Reader* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), p. 103.

context of the novel.

In Chapter Three I discuss Wilde's treatment of the gaze in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with reference to each character in turn – Basil, Lord Henry and Dorian himself. Where the gaze of the artist is engaged, emotionally invested and moral, the gaze of Lord Henry, the aesthete and dandy, is detached, analytical and amoral, cynical and misogynistic. Lord Henry's 'dissection' of Dorian indicates a kind of visceral quality to the gaze. The playful confusion within the novel regarding whether the man or the portrait is the 'real' Dorian will be used to discuss the construction of Dorian's identity and the location of his soul. I then consider the novel with reference to Hawthorne and Poe, before concluding the chapter with further contextualisation in terms of late-nineteenth-century visual culture.

Chapter Four differs in structure to the preceding chapters, focusing more generally on the city in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. I begin with Prendick's return to a seemingly disorderly London at the end of *Moreau* in which Wells appears to posit the idea of a kind of cultural degeneration through the misapprehending gaze of the narrator. This leads into a more general discussion of the mob. Next, I address the depiction of the city in Stevenson, notably in terms of its empty streets. Hyde represents an eruption of both bodily and civic disorder. In the third section I discuss the figure of the *flâneur*, principally with reference to the atavistic vampire. In the fourth section I examine the split city of *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, which I contrast with Stoker's London by way of conclusion.

In Chapter Five, I consider the hypnotic power of the gaze in *Dracula*, with additional reference to *Trilby* and Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* (1897). All three novels feature ethnically alien villains, who use their power to control their respective victims, for

various dark purposes. I consider the way in which the novels tap into the sexual and criminal anxieties that surrounded the figure of the mesmerist and hypnotist in the mind of the Victorian public.

# Chapter 1

## The Gaze, Transgressive Science and the Law: *The Island of Doctor Moreau*

### Introduction

In this chapter I consider *The Island of Doctor Moreau* with reference: first, to the narrator as observer; second, to the transgressive scientist Moreau; and third, to 'the Law' through which he rules the island. *Moreau* is the first-person narrative of Edward Prendick, who describes how he is shipwrecked and cast adrift in the lifeboat of the *Lady Vain*, before being rescued by a schooner with a cargo of animals destined for Moreau's island, upon which he is eventually set down. His account is written retrospectively but he depicts events as they unfold. Moreau attempts to turn animals into humans in his operating theatre on the island. As the appellation of his scientific creations suggests, the Beast People confound the distinction between the human and the animal. My discussion will begin with the perceptual drama that characterises looking in the early stages of the novel, as Prendick struggles to get to grips with the sight of the monstrous islanders. An amateur natural historian, Prendick is inquisitive by nature. As we shall see, he constantly makes category errors, misreading one situation in terms of another. This is key because the misapprehending subject opens up textual space for readers to make their own (mis)readings, informed by Darwinian theory, religion or colonialism, which gives the text a layered complexity in the process. Prendick labours under the illusion that the islanders are human in origin, until Moreau explains that they are 'humanised animals – triumphs of vivisection' half way through the novel.[1] Having considered the narrator as observer, I shall

[1] H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), ed. by Brian Aldiss (London: Everyman, 1993), p. 68. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

go on to look at Wells's depiction of the transgressive scientist himself and contextualise the novel in terms of the late nineteenth century debate on vivisection. Moreau's inability to master the laws of Darwinian evolution in his operating theatre necessitates his invention of the Law, rules that prohibit animal, or primitive, behaviour on the island and which he cruelly enforces, the topic of the final section of the chapter. I compare and contrast the Law with Kipling's 'Law of the Jungle', reading both authors' work in the context of colonialism. Of particular concern is the way in which violence is the supplement of 'law' and I conclude with a discussion of Conrad's critique of colonialism in *Heart of Darkness*.

### 1.1. (Mis)Reading the Beast Man: The Narrator as Observer

The first half of *Moreau* consists of a series of mini-climaxes and incongruities, as Prendick struggles to process 'the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of strangest familiarity', given by the grotesque-looking islanders (p.40). On board the schooner, the *Ipecacuanha* he is nursed back to health by Moreau's assistant, Montgomery, and he recovers sufficiently to go up on deck. Blocking his way on the ladder is the scientist's personal attendant, M'ling, who turns round for an instant. Writes Prendick:

> In some indefinable way the black face thus flashed upon me shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed as big white teeth as I have ever seen in a human mouth. His eyes were bloodshot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white round the hazel pupils. There was a curious glow of excitement in his face. (p.11)

M'ling physically displays the mark of the animal, or the primitive. Indeed, Kelly Hurley identifies 'a certain physical likeness between the not-quite-evolved beast people [in

general] and the atavistic 'criminal types' elaborated by Lombroso'.[2] It can be suggested that M'ling's incomplete development is symbolised by his position on this metaphoric ladder of evolution. The point, however, is that Prendick is unable to identify the mark. On the one hand, this is a narrative requirement in order to generate suspense as revelation is delayed, but his perceptual framework is also stretched beyond its limits. There is a clear-cut division between human and animal categories to his way of thinking. His assumption that the islanders are human militates against his recognition of the mark. It may also be an unconscious refusal to recognise it, intended to preserve the illusion of inhabiting a world governed by clear-cut categories.

Moreau's 'evil-looking' boatmen pose the same problem to the observer:

> I saw only their faces, yet there was something in their faces – I knew not what – that gave me a queer spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass, though I failed to see what had occasioned it. They seemed to me then to be brown men, but their limbs were oddly swathed in some thin dirty white stuff down even to the fingers and feet. I have never seen men so wrapped up before, and women so only in the East. They wore turbans too, and thereunder peered out their elfin faces at me, faces with protruding lower jaws and bright eyes [...].
>
> As I stared at them they met my gaze, and then first one and then another turned away from my direct stare and looked at me in an odd furtive manner. (p.25)

Prendick's fixed gaze indicates the paradoxical nature of disgust in this instance and which is a key feature of the monstrous in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic more generally. 'It is a commonplace that the disgusting can attract as well as repel', notes William Miller in *The Anatomy of Disgust* (1997): 'even as the disgusting repels, it rarely does do without also capturing our attention. It imposes itself upon us. [...] The disgusting has an allure; it exerts

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[2] Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 103. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

a fascination which manifests itself in the difficulty of averting our eyes'.[3] In the following chapters we shall consider the allure of the disgusting with reference to Hyde and Dorian's picture. Prendick's desire to look is driven by the repulsive features of the Beast Men, as well as his own inability to account for that repulsion beyond the notion of an evident deformity.

In *Vision and Painting* (1983), Norman Bryson distinguishes

> the activity of the *gaze*, prolonged, contemplative, yet regarding the field of vision with a certain aloofness and disengagement, across a tranquil interval, from that of the *glance*, a furtive or sideways look whose attention is always elsewhere, which shifts to conceal its own existence, and which is capable of carrying unofficial, *sub rosa* messages of hostility, collusion, rebellion, and lust.[4]

This distinction between the gaze and the glance is clearly illustrated in the episode above, with the boatmen unable to withstand Prendick's scrutiny. The gaze and the glance are signs of species difference here. Their inability to meet his gaze is yet another indication of their animal natures. Prendick maintains his composure as spectator in this instance but on board the *Ipecacuanha* the previous night, his detachment collapses when his gaze is briefly returned by the animalistic glance of M'ling, who has been 'watching the stars'. It is illuminated 'with a pale green light' by the nearby lantern (p.18). The cat-like flash of M'ling's eyes from the schooner's rail assaults Prendick 'like a sudden blow' and prompts a kind of psychological regression:

> I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity. That black figure, with its eyes of fire, struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. (p.18)

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[3] William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. x-22. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[4] Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 94.

The term 'thing' is indicative of a lack of specificity and is repeatedly applied to the *fin-de-siècle* monster. In *Dracula*, for example, Mina stifles her pity for the Count with the reflection that 'this Thing is not human – not even beast'.[5] According to Botting, 'The vampire is constructed as absolute object, the complete antithesis of subjectivity' (p.151).[6] Such is the impact upon Prendick of M'ling's animal eyes that their signification, what he will later refer to in terms of 'that transitory gleam of [...] true animalism', is paradoxically negated in his mind: M'ling is 'not even beast' (in the words of Mina), when he most evidently is (p.40). Notice how M'ling becomes momentarily indeterminate in terms of gender and species, before his humanity is ironically restored in terms of Prendick's (mis)perception of a 'black figure of a man' (p.18). In fact, this is a double misperception in the sense that Prendick seems to perceive M'ling as human but racially other, either side of this momentary slip into the category of the demonic suggested by the 'eyes of fire'. The preceding Kiplingesque wordplay ('Why the devil don't you get out of the way?' Montgomery rebukes M'ling (p.11)) and the captain's more forthright accusation that 'he's a devil, an ugly devil,' nominally gestures towards the demonic, though the way in which M'ling is bullied by the sailors makes him a most ineffectual fiend (p.15). It also further clouds the issue of who is the actual 'beast' on board the *Ipecacuanha* out of the cargo of animals destined for vivisection on the island, the human-like animal M'ling, the suspected cannibal (Prendick), the drunken and despotic captain, the animal-like sailors, or the strange Montgomery, guilty of an unspecified transgression and whose 'watery' eyes recall

[5] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), ed. by Maud Ellmann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 228. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[6] For a discussion of 'thing-ness' in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic see Hurley, pp. 28-38.

Frankenstein's creature (p.8). In other words, the distinction between the animal and the human is blurred long before the island is reached.

The hindsight with which Prendick tries to rationalise his reaction to M'ling's eyes, foreshadows his own degeneration on the island towards the end of the novel: 'I am told that even now my eyes have a strange brightness, a swift alertness of movement', writes Prendick in the penultimate chapter (p.122). Eyes then are of considerable importance in the novel, one of the key signs of the animal and employed by Wells to illustrate the erosion of the boundary between species categories, as suggested by the shining eyes Prendick comes to share with the Beast Men. Eyes, obviously useful as a sign to the writer because of their visibility, are also important in the other main texts under discussion, symptomatic perhaps of the centrality of issues and themes of vision. For example, *Jekyll and Hyde* is full of literal and metaphorical references to eyes, starting with the initial description of Utterson when at his most convivial: 'At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eyes; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke [...] in these silent symbols' (p.31). The hungry and thirsty eyes of the silent men in the dinghy of the *Lady Vain* both indicate their physical decline and the emergence of the animal, or the primitive, within: 'we were already thinking strange things and saying them with our eyes' (p.6). 'Strange things' is an euphemism for the cannibalism the narrator cannot name, in part, because of his self-disgust. The reticence of his writing echoes his original silence in the boat. Language is a crucial theme in *Moreau*. In his introduction to the novel, Brian Aldiss makes the point that, 'What divides the Beast People from the animal is less their near-human shape, more their ability to use language. [...] "With speech humanity begins,"

Wells was to say, a few years after writing *Doctor Moreau*' (p.xxxiv). The fact that Montgomery speaks 'with a slobbering articulation' and the captain drunkenly slurs his words is an indication of their animality (p.8). Prendick's inability to find the words to describe the animal objects of his gaze on the island, or to name the suggestion of cannibalism in the dinghy, is ironic; it indicates his own lack of 'humanity'. As with the Beast Men (and Prendick) towards the end of the novel, the men's loss of speech in the dinghy indicates a kind of reversion or cultural regression: articulation shifts to the eyes as humanity ends. Paradoxically, the opposite is also true. The way in which the men refrain from articulating the suggestion of cannibalism marks the last vestige of their civilised humanity. It is also symbolic that the proposal is voiced on the sixth day. Creation takes six days in Genesis: here it takes six days for the men to de-evolve. When Prendick finally identifies the animal characteristics of the islanders, he borrows a phrase from the book of Revelation, 'the mark of the beast' (p.40). Of course, 'the number of the beast' in that Book is 'Six hundred threescore and six' ('666'); in other words, one 'six' for each 'beast' in the boat (Ch 12, v.18). Prendick himself initially resists the proposal but the notion that he is more cultured that his two companions is soon dispelled; his resistance lasts only until the following morning. Although cannibalism is ultimately avoided as a fight breaks out and his fellow men fall overboard, Prendick is revitalised with what appears to be iced blood by Montgomery. The fact that he has lost his voice when he wakes up on the schooner, as well as his request for food once it is restored, along with his subsequent excitement induced by the smell of the cooking meat, are all signs of his atavism.

The way in which Prendick reacts to the sight of M'ling's eyes also says something about the narrator's nervous temperament. 'You're always fearing and fancying,'

Montgomery tells him towards the end of the novel (p.105). This is the mindset through which Prendick views life on the island, which means that he rarely sees things as they are and acts in accordance with his distorted outlook, which disrupts its order. Montgomery even tries to exploit the fact of his overactive imagination at one point, by suggesting that the Beast Man who has just chased him across the island was really a phantom. Prendick never does elaborate on his reference to 'the forgotten horrors of childhood' but he is reduced to a childlike state on other occasions. When Moreau initially refuses to have him on the island and he is cast adrift once more, Prendick becomes hysterical:

> I suddenly began to sob and weep as I had never done since I was a little child. The tears ran down my face. In a passion of despair I struck with my fists at the water in the bottom of the boat, and kicked savagely at the gunwhale. (p.23)

The child motif recurs in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. Dorian Gray, for example, hides the degenerating picture in his old play-room, while the efficacy of the wish not only freezes his youthful features into a living mask but allows him to live in a state of perpetual adolescence. Jekyll also seeks freedom from adult responsibility in the stunted form of Hyde. Critics like Stephen Arata have noted the similarities between Lombroso's 'criminal type' and the atavistic Hyde.[7] When he runs down the young girl or clubs to death Sir Danvers Carew, he is 'criminal man' in the form of an impetuous child, the point being that these two figures are akin in Lombrosian criminal anthropology. As Brian Baker notes with reference to *Criminal Man According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso* (1911), written by Lombroso's daughter Gina, 'The "criminal" [...] is analogous to the child in its "moral insanity:" its ethical sense has been "arrested" at a pre-adult stage [...] [and]

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[7] Stephen Arata, see Chapter 2, 'The Sedulous Ape: Atavism, Professionalism, and Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*' in *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 33-53.

represents a type of being further back along the evolutionary chain'.[8] Adrift again, Prendick shows a similar mixture of the infantile and the savage to Hyde, as he rails against his helplessness. The fact he is dressed in Montgomery's clothes after his rescue, which are far too large for him, not only makes him look more like a child but also brings to mind Hyde, after Jekyll's involuntary transformation in Regent's Park. The episode in the *Lady Vain* may only have disclosed Prendick's potential atavism, unless the suspicions of his cannibalism are correct – and he is an unreliable narrator, who proves eminently capable of looking after himself when he joins the Beast Men after the death of the two scientists – but either way his degeneration clearly begins long before the 'strange changes' recorded in the penultimate chapter of the novel (p.122). As Cyndy Hendershot notes, 'Prendick is [already] slipping down the ladder of evolution from hysterical women to child to savage and, finally, to animal.'[9] Thus, his position at the foot of the ladder on board the *Ipecacuanha* as M'ling blocks his way is also symbolic.

Prendick's misapprehension of the Beast Men as colonial subjects is indicated by the repeated emphasis upon their colour – the 'brown' boatmen and the 'black' M'ling; the first figure he sees upon the island has 'a black negroid face' (p.26). This simultaneously rationalises their extreme strangeness and maintains the difference against which he can define himself as a white Englishman. It also points to the island's true power structure and the quasi-colonial role Moreau's scientific deficiencies force him to play, as well as caters for an actual colonial interpretation of the novel. Its apparent racial variety makes the island a kind of miniature of the British Empire. Anomalies actually make it difficult for Prendick

[8] Brian Baker, 'Darwin's Gothic: Science and Literature in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Literature and Science: Social Impact and Interaction*, ed. by John H. Cartwright and Brian Baker (Santa Barbara, Denver, Oxford: ABC-CLIO, 2005), p. 210. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[9] Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 136. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

to maintain his notion of the Beast Men as colonial subjects. For example, the boat crew retain an 'indefinable queerness', in part, because the furtive looks with which they return his gaze do not tally with 'the frank stare of your unsophisticated savage' (p.31). As Hurley suggests, the mystery of the racial identity of the islanders typically distracts Prendick from ascertaining the real reason for their uncanny familiarity and strangeness (p.105). Racial otherness is also refuted by the 'dull pinkish drab colour' of the three islanders Prendick spots in the wild habitat of the island's forest, having been driven out of the enclosure by the cries of the vivisected puma (p.39). This is the right idea for the wrong reason: these islanders are not 'savages' but their skin colour attests to their animal origin (swine) rather than their racial sameness (p.39). In fact, Prendick belatedly identifies the sign, as he spies on them engaged in a peculiar ritual. The signification that has so far eluded him becomes clear:

> Suddenly, as I watched their grotesque and unaccountable gestures, I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me [...]. The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it, into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence, some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast. (p.40)

The identification is confirmed when one of the figures slips onto 'all-fours', a significant detail because only a few pages later Prendick is to be found in a similar posture, when he is turned out of his hammock (p.40). 'Unmistakable' is clearly ironic in light of his repeated category errors. Given Prendick's momentary (mis)recognition of M'ling as demonic on the schooner, there is also an irony in his biblical choice of phrase to express his identification of the animal sign. With its suggestion of travesty, it conveys his sense of disgust – disgust that has less to do with an essential disgustingness of the animal than with its radical

proximity to the human. Just as Prendick instinctively recoils from M'ling, so his immediate response in this instance is to run away. Moreau subsequently uses the phrase himself, not with reference to the animal but to the human, or rather the animal that remains within the human in terms of the susceptibility to pleasure and pain, and which must be eradicated:

> 'This store men and women set on pleasure and pain, Prendick, is the mark of the beast upon them, the mark of the beast from which they came. Pain! Pain and pleasure – they are for us, only so long as we wriggle in the dust.' (p.72)

Moreau's obliviousness to the pain he inflicts upon the animals in his operating theatre is indicative of his own moral beastliness. Thus, 'the mark of the beast' signifies the animal origin of the beast men but their bodies also bears the surgical 'mark' made by the 'beast' Moreau, who can also be read in symbolic terms as the beast of the apocalypse.

In his article 'Doctor Moreau and His Beast People', David Seed links Wells's use of the phrase from the Book of Revelation back to Rudyard Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast', published in *Life's Handicap* (1891), noting how 'Wells took a considerable number of details from the story (silvery appearance, green light in the eyes, thick speech) and applied them to the Beast People.'[10] This werewolf story describes the transformation of an Englishman named Fleete, after he is bitten by a faceless leper, 'a Silver Man', having drunkenly defiled the image of Hanuman the monkey god in an Indian temple with his cigar-butt: 'Shee that?' he asks Strickland and the unnamed narrator, who accompanies him, 'Mark of the B – beasht! *I* made it. Ishn't it fine?'.[11] As Patrick Brantlinger notes, 'Imperial Gothic expresses anxieties [...] about the ease with which civilization can revert

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[10] David Seed, 'Dr Moreau and the Beast People', *Udolpho*, 17 (June 1994), pp. 8-12 (p. 11). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[11] Rudyard Kipling, *Life's Handicap* (1891) (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 197. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

to barbarism or savagery and thus about the weakening of British imperial hegemony'.[12] Fleete is 'marked' in turn by the Silver Man, for when the men examine the bite the following day, they find 'a mark, the perfect double of the black rosettes [...] on a leopard's hide' (p.198). Thus, the Silver Man imitates or mirrors Fleete by marking him; indeed, his appellation indicates his reflective function. The narrator points out that the Indian Penal Code covers Fleete's offence. Nonetheless, he is punished for his desecration of the image through supernatural agency rather than in accordance with the law (though there are doubts about the veracity of what happens). Like the victim of the vampire in *Dracula*, this involves the reversal of evolutionary law across the body of the 'bewitched' Fleete: the animal within the human is disclosed, as if he has been infected when bitten (p.203). Fleete, as Victor Sage suggests, 'polluted the temple idol and is polluted in return'.[13] He quickly develops an acute sense of smell, craves raw meat the next day which he savagely eats, unnerves other animals and is discovered on all-fours in the garden that evening. His dirtiness is symbolic of his fleshly pollution:

> 'Come in,' said Strickland sternly. 'Come in at once.'
> Fleete came, and when the lamps were brought, we saw that he was literally plastered with dirt from head to foot. He must have been rolling in the garden. He shrank from the light and went to his room. His eyes were horrible to look at. There was a green light behind them, not in them, if you understand, and the man's lower lip hung down. (pp. 201-202)

According to Miller, 'The eye, though jelly, is the only orifice we think of as leading not to muck and slime but instead to the spiritual inside; it is a window, even a portal, to the soul [...] [which is why] the eye can surely horrify' (p.90). The eyes signal the loss of that

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[12] Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 186. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[13] Victor Sage, 'Empire Gothic: Explanation and Epiphany in Conan Doyle, Kipling and Chesterton', in *Creepers*, ed. by Clive Bloom (London: Pluto, 1993), pp. 3-23 (p. 13). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

which elevated Fleete above the beast, just as they mark its restoration at the end of the story to the two witnesses: 'We watched the face of the beast, and saw the soul of Fleete coming back into the eyes. Then [...] the eyes – they were human eyes – closed' (p.206). In a way which anticipates the men in the dinghy of the *Lady Vain* and the Beast Men, including Prendick, towards the end of *Moreau*, the completion of the transformation is displayed by his loss of speech:

> Fleete could not speak, he could only snarl, and his snarls were those of a wolf, not of a man. The human spirit must have been giving way all day and have died out with the twilight. We were dealing with a beast that had once been Fleete. (p.202)

In this way Fleete is punished, while the nature of his punishment reinforces the tenor of his drunken observation, for the 'beast' that was Fleete bears the 'mark' of Hanuman. Fleete has de-evolved to an animal state, one stage below the leper, who seems to be in between species, 'mewing like a she-otter' in a way that looks to the imaginary Beast Women Prendick sees on the streets of London at the end of *Moreau* (p.203). At one point the narrator hears the leper outside the house but 'the cry' defies classification (p.204).

'What on earth was he – man or animal?' (p.41). Prendick's recognition of 'the mark of the beast' is sandwiched between an encounter with a similarly unclassifiable figure in the forest, the reverting Leopard Man. The narrator is relaxing near a stream when his reverie is disturbed:

> Then suddenly upon the bank of the stream appeared something – at first I could not distinguish what it was. It bowed its head to the water and began to drink. Then I saw it was a man, going on all-fours like a beast! (p.37)

The 'man' sees Prendick and returns his gaze before apparently disappearing. The unnerved narrator comforts himself with the thought that this animal-like human is clothed, the sign that he is civilised rather than 'savage', yet another misreading (p.38). The unexpected and

strange nature of the encounter, in addition to the fact that the narrator has just been daydreaming, also lend this unsettling figure a kind of spectral quality, Prendick twice referring to him as the 'apparition' (p.38). This sets the tone for the nightmarish and otherworldly experiences to come in the forest. Haunted by the paradoxical impression of 'the inhuman face of the man', Prendick grows increasingly anxious when he comes across a freshly killed rabbit (p.39). His imagination populates the forest with unseen eyes observing him. The fear that he is the object of a hostile or predatory gaze is realised after his flight from the three Swine People. He notices that he is being stalked by the indeterminate figure or 'Thing' (p.41). Nightfall subsequently compounds the danger of the situation through the loss of visibility, which also fuels his imagination: 'I could see nothing – or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness' (p.43). All the while he is visible to the feline eyes of the creature.

Prendick records how the forest 'melted into one formless blackness' (p.42). According to Seed, 'the forest dramatize[s] in physical terms his loss of conceptual clarity. As darkness closes in, all things melt together [...]. All objects and categories become indistinct from each other' (p.9). The way in which forms melt into one another in the forest is analogous to the dissolution of the Leopard Man's human identity itself. 'Formless blackness' symbolises the evolutionary processes that Moreau studies but cannot master and which eventually destroy him in the form of the rebellious puma, who, as Hendershot notes, 'stands for feminine Darwinian nature – dangerous, uncontrollable, random' – and voracious (p.136). For Prendick narrowly avoids being eaten for the second time in quick succession. This insertion into the edible food chain indicates his slide down

the evolutionary ladder, as does the savage response such insertion calls for. He fashions a makeshift sling and knocks the Leopard Man out with a stone, one of a number of basic weapons he makes on the island and which identify him with Early Man. For example, no sooner has he identified correctly the animal sign, than he jumps to the conclusion that the islanders are humans who have been animalised by Moreau. Fearing that he is to be vivisected next, he arms himself with a nailed stick hastily stripped from a deckchair and flees from the enclosure. Furthermore, unable to take over from Moreau when he dies, Prendick joins the Beast Men and establishes a kind of 'pre-eminence', based on his ability to inflict nasty wounds with his hatchet (p.119).

As the misapprehension that Moreau vivisects humans suggests, Prendick's (mis)reading of the islanders becomes bound up with the off-limits operating theatre on the island. Locked doors, another detail from *Jekyll and Hyde*, bar his way and block his gaze. 'Our little establishment contains a secret or so,' Moreau informs Prendick upon his arrival on the island, 'is a kind of Bluebeard's Chamber, in fact' (pp. 29-30). Bluebeard's curious wife discovers the bodies of his former wives in the forbidden chamber. Charles Perrault's fairytale is partly illustrative of the way in which the prohibition (not to look) encourages the transgression (to look) it is supposed to prevent. Unlike the wife, Prendick only catches a glimpse inside the laboratory. This glimpse of the vivisected puma confirms the misapprehension that Moreau vivisects men, even though the sight itself, which echoes *Frankenstein* (1818), is indeterminate. 'I saw something bound painfully upon a framework', writes Prendick, 'I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisecting a human being. [...] These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment!' (pp.48-50). Moreau subsequently lifts the prohibition so that Prendick

can correct the error and reassure himself as to the nature of his research. The only other time he goes into the laboratory is with Montgomery to destroy Moreau's experiments after he has been killed. The reader, however, is left outside on both occasions; the inside is not described. To that extent, the reference to the fairytale is deceptive because the privilege given to the gaze in that story is denied in *Moreau*. Moreau's chamber of horrors is largely left to the imagination. Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast' was criticised for this reason, as shall be considered further in a later section (1.3.3.).

Montgomery gives Prendick an initial clue as to what lies behind the door, when he inadvertently reveals Moreau's name. The very fact that the name of the scientist has been withheld is an indication of his notoriety and the narrator eventually connects it to a decade-old vivisection scandal. The 'The Moreau Horrors' of 1877 takes its title from an anti-vivisection pamphlet published by an undercover journalist who gets a job as Moreau's assistant: 'by the help of a shocking accident – if it was an accident – his gruesome pamphlet became notorious. On the day of its publication, a wretched dog, flayed and otherwise mutilated, escaped from Moreau's house' (p.32). Prendick also recalls that Moreau has published some remarkable research on blood transfusion, which possibly accounts for Montgomery's ability to revive the shipwrecked narrator so successfully (one also wonders whether Van Helsing has read it, in light of the transfusions Lucy receives). Be that as it may, the memory of the transfusion research recurs a short while later so as to compound his suspicion that Moreau experiments on humans. Wells taps into the vivisection debate of the last decades of the nineteenth century by depicting Moreau in terms of the transgressive vivisector, just one of the ways in which the novel updates the theme of *Frankenstein* (Victor himself describes how he 'tortured the living animal to

animate the lifeless clay').[14] Contemporary commentators reviewed the novel in the context of this debate: for example, the *Spectator* considered it to be an anti-vivisectionist tract, while the *Athenaeum* suggested that is was 'about as valuable for such a purpose as a pornological story in suppressing immorality'.[15] Interestingly, Prendick is ambivalent about the scandal. As usual, he offers a kind of balanced self-contradiction, negotiating between vivisection and the implicit public view of it as evil:

> It was not the first time that conscience had turned against the methods of research. The doctor was simply howled out of the country. It may be he deserved to be, but I still think the tepid support of his fellow-investigators, and his desertion by the great body of scientific workers was a shameful thing. Yet some of his experiments, by the journalist's account, were wantonly cruel. (p.32)

'Howled' registers his disdain for this regressive mob rule, as well as anticipates his hallucination upon his return to London, when he misapprehends his fellow citizens as Beast Men. The fact that Prendick has studied under T. H. Huxley, who counters the arguments of the anti-vivisection lobby in the run up to the Cruelty to Animals Act, passed in 1876, helps explain his ambivalence. Notice the contrast between the Prendick who is stumped by the concealment on the island because 'there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy' (an unusual and short-lived lack of imagination on his part), and his original incarnation in the first version of *Moreau* (p.33). The following conversation takes places between Moreau and Prendick in that version:

> 'So you'r[e] interested in Natural History,' he said. 'Do you know anything of practical physiology?'
> 'It's the part I know least of.'
> 'Don't like laboratory-work perhaps?'

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[14] Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), ed. by Marilyn Butler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 36. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[15] *H. G. Wells: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Patrick Parrinder (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 46 and p. 52. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

'I don't mind that. But the bare thought of vivisection turns me sick.'[16]

The point is that Prendick's ultimate condemnation of Moreau's project is all the stronger for this renewed stance on vivisection, his ability to stomach it: 'Had Moreau any intelligible object I could have sympathised at least a little with him. I am not so squeamish about pain as that' (p.93). I shall return to the topic of vivisection shortly in the discussion of Moreau himself but one final thought on the scandal is that it results in the resumption of his research in exile. Frankenstein retreats to the seclusion of the furthest island in the Orkneys, in order to construct his female creature without interference. Moreau occupies an island in the Pacific, where he is a law unto himself, able to resume his transgressive experiments without further fear of exposure. Prendick's arrival changes that in the sense that his subsequent narrative the reader has in their hands represents a second exposure of sorts, qualified not by a vivisected dog but by an 'animalised' human, the author himself.

The locked door that leads to the laboratory conceals from view but discloses sounds and smells. Prendick's suspicion as to the identity of Moreau is strengthened by 'the antiseptic odour of the operating-room' that seeps out (p.33). In other words, the restriction on sight brings other senses into play. Hearing is especially important in the novel. Audible, as well as visual signs of species difference, are juxtaposed. From his cabin on the *Ipecacuanha*, Prendick hears 'a snarling growl and the voice of a human being together' on deck (p.9). It is exactly this kind of divorce between sight and sound that facilitates Prendick's misreading of the situation in the laboratory, as Wells plays on one of the key fears of the anti-vivisection lobby: of the practice being extended to include human subjects. In the words of Lewis Carroll:

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[16] H. G. Wells. *The Island of Doctor Moreau A Variorum Text*, ed. by Robert M. Philmus (Athens and London: the University of Georgia Press, 1993), p. 104.

> the possible advent of a day when anatomy shall claim, as legitimate subjects for experiment, first, our condemned criminals – next, perhaps, the inmates of our refuges for incurables – then the hopeless lunatic, the pauper-hospital patient, and generally 'him that hath no helper', – a day when successive generations of students, trained from the earliest years to the repression of all human sympathies, shall have developed a new and more hideous Frankenstein – a soulless being to whom science shall be all in all.[17]

Having identified the islanders as species hybrids, Prendick suspects that Moreau is this 'new and more hideous Frankenstein', when he hears what sound like human cries of pain coming from the operating theatre, in a further echo of *Jekyll and Hyde*. In fear of his life, Prendick flees from the enclosure and seeks refuge with the Beast Men.

### 1.2. 'A Hand that was Smeared Red': Transgressive Science

Like a late-nineteenth-century Frankenstein, Moreau plays the role of God the Creator in his secluded island laboratory. His experiments on animals are driven by the desire to construct a flawless human being. Significantly, the Pacific island he occupies is in the vicinity of the Galapagos Islands, Charles Darwin's observations of which culminated in the theory of evolution by natural selection, as propounded in his *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection* (1859). The point is that Moreau competes with Darwinian nature in his laboratory, while one of the metaphoric ways in which his project can be read is in

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[17] Lewis Carroll, 'Some Popular Fallacies about Vivisection', in Wilkie Collins, *Heart and Science* (1883), ed. by Steve Farmer (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1996), pp. 348-349. All further references will be given in the body of the text. It was still a concern to Lord Chief Justice Coleridge writing seven years later: 'no one doubts that to cut up a hundred men and women would enlarge the bounds of knowledge as to the human frame more speedily and far more widely than to torture a thousand dogs or ten thousand cats' ('The Nineteenth Century Defenders of Vivisection', *Fortnightly Review* XXXVIII (February 1882), in Collins, p.354). Human vivisection was also used as a metaphor for perceived surgical practice, notably on women. 'Moreover, vivisection of animals was the symptom of a more general mistreatment of the helpless and unprotected, Cobbe argued. And, in particular, she asserted that a great deal of the "miseries and ill-health, and, in many cases, death of women (of the poorer classes especially)" could be attributed to the "Human Vivisection" carried out by medical practitioners and operators in women's hospital "too fond by half of the knife"' (Brian Easlea, *Science and Sexual Oppression* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p. 150).

terms of evolution itself, something further suggested by his random choice of 'the human form' (p.71). Moreau tampers with evolutionary processes to accelerate an extraordinary variety of animals – ape, bear, bull, dog, fox, goat, gorilla, horse, hyena, leopard, ox, pig, puma, rhinoceros, sheep, tiger and wolf – often in bizarre combinations of two and even three (M'ling is 'a bear tainted with dog and ox'(p.81)) into animal men. 'These creatures you have seen are animals carven and wrought into new shapes,' he informs Prendick: 'To that – to the study of the plasticity of living forms – my life has been devoted' (p.69). 'Human identity' in *The Island of Dr. Moreau* is so unremarkable a thing', suggests Hurley, 'that it can be duplicated by a few weeks of close labor, wherein Moreau accomplished what Nature, working through natural selection, accomplished in millennia' (p.106). Moreau's results are 'unremarkable' in the sense that he succeeds only in creating bizarre, unstable hybrid creatures, but the irony is that this makes them more like humans beings in many ways.

The artistic or shaping metaphors Moreau uses to describe his scientific practice like 'carven' and 'moulded' were prevalent in the discourse of vivisection (p.69, p.73). The antivivisectionists took them to be clear evidence of the heartless detachment of the unethical vivisector. According to one prominent opponent in the *Fortnightly Review* (1882), Lord Chief Justice Coleridge:

> the animal world was to a man of science like the clay to the potter, or marble to the sculptor, to be crushed or carved at his will with no more reference to pain in animals than if they were clay or marble. (quoted in Collins, p.356)

In her attack on vivisection in an article in the *Contemporary Review* (1882), Frances Power Cobbe quoted Claude Bernard's description of the model vivisector, one like the insensate Moreau, 'who does not hear the animal's cries of pain, and is blind to the blood

that flows, and who sees nothing but his idea and organisms which conceal from him the secrets he is resolved to discover' (quoted in Collins, p.362). Mary Shelley describes how Frankenstein 'disturbed with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame' (p.36). Moreau also practices an 'odious handywork' of sorts, in the words of Shelley's later 'Introduction' (1831) (quoted in Shelley, p.196). The blood-stained hand with which he lifts the prying Prendick out of the way at one point – as if he is 'a little child' incidentally – symbolises Moreau's instrumentality, one that allows for the de-coupling of ethical sense (p.48). This 'handywork' is 'celebrated' or enshrined in one of the verses of the Law chanted by the Beast Men:

> '*His* is the House of Pain.
> '*His* is the Hand that makes.
> '*His* is the Hand that wounds.
> '*His* is the Hand that heals.' (p.57)

Whether we read Moreau as playing the role of God on the island, or as a metaphor for God himself, his scientific practice is characterised in terms of its dreadful cruelty, a point to which we shall return. In his introduction to *The Scientific Romances* (1933), Wells describes *Moreau* in terms of his 'vision of the aimless torture in creation'.[18] 'Torture' is 'aimless' partly because of the deficiency of creation; the deficient nature of humanity renders this 'torture' pointless. 'Aimless' also suggests a Darwinian notion of 'creation', the fact that evolution is a random process. Moreau's instrumentality strengthens the analogy between himself and Darwinian nature. It is as if he is all process: instrument as opposed to agent.

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[18] H. G. Wells, *The Scientific Romances* (London: Gollancz, 1933), p. ix. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

One further point about the emphasis upon the hand of Moreau is that it is indicative of the fragmentary nature of the descriptions of him. Sometimes he is no more than a hand, though more often he is represented in terms of a head. This is emblematic of the fact that Moreau is of the mind. To that extent he is like the Houyhnhnm in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), those rational beings whose state of enlightenment is dependent upon the exclusion and denigration of the bodily in the form of the Yahoo. The general assembly debates 'whether the Yahoo should be exterminated', a theme that recurs in all the texts discussed in this chapter.[19] Moreau's disembodied figure is symbolic of his conception of the ideal human, one purified of evolutionary origins or metaphorical fleshliness. As with Jekyll, when he wakes up as Hyde without realising it until he spots his bestial hand, it also suggests that Moreau is not-quite-there; he is not a fully integrated subject. Moreau is clearly in the tradition of the Frankensteinian transgressive scientist and has similarly chosen a secluded and secret place for his operations: but in this respect he is more like Frankenstein's creature. Despite the fact of his physical monstrosity, the creature has a spectral presence in the novel, something suggested by his typically moonlit appearances. Walton refers to him as the 'apparition' when he spots him through his telescope crossing the ice at the beginning of the novel (p.12). Interestingly, he assumes that the creature is 'a savage inhabitant of some undiscovered island', just as Frankenstein's younger brother takes him for a cannibal (p.13). This misapprehension anticipates Prendick's initial misreading of the Beast Men in terms of the racial other. However, Moreau is also a spectral or shadowy figure. This is partly because he is 'singularly solitary in his habits', which also makes him like the creature (p.13). Prendick hardly sees him in the enclosure.

[19] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 299. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

He is literally not about: and even when he is, it is as if he is not-quite-there, as suggested above. This non-materiality also ties in with his role of Law-Giver; he is the God-like figure who hovers at the top of the system on the island.

In fact, it is Prendick who is more like Frankenstein. Both men have an ethical sense but run away rather than face up to things and live in a state of self-deception. Frankenstein is the man of sensibility whose sense of revulsion, having failed to deter him from his abhorrent project, is sufficiently aroused upon the body's animation to make him rush away. In other words, in an attempt to avoid further wrongdoing, he actually perpetuates an additional transgression, one which develops into the most serious of which he is guilty; the failure to take responsibility for the act of creation and to fulfil his 'parental' duty. He has chosen beautiful individual features but his overall impression is of 'unearthly ugliness [...] too horrible for human eyes' (p.76). His inability to face the creature marks a refusal to accept the fact of his 'parenthood'; that with his lofty ambitions, he could have 'conceived' such an obscene individual. Even as Frankenstein brings the creature into being, he denies the human identity of his creation, 'a thing' beyond description: an animated collection of body parts, as is suggested by Frankenstein's fragmentary description of him in terms of 'eyes', 'jaws' or 'hand' (pp.39-40). Frankenstein rushes away because the understanding of his scientific activity as unnatural, unlawful and unethical, deadened by the endless horrors of his work, is reawoken by the sight of his 'newborn' creation. He cannot face his creation because the physical hideousness of the creature reflects back his own monstrosity.

Prendick also recalls Lemuel Gulliver, of course. Prendick's disgust of the islanders is like Gulliver's revulsion of the Yahoos: 'I never beheld so disagreeable an animal', he writes (p.246). The shocking recognition of 'a perfectly human figure' beneath their odd

appearance and apparent deformity, results in that revulsion being redirected towards himself (p.253). 'When I happened to behold the reflection of my form in a lake or fountain', he recalls, 'I turned away my face in horror and detestation of myself' (p.308). His clothes help distinguish him from the Yahoo in the eyes of the Houyhnhnm but are also indicative of the superficiality and the fragility of that distinction as they start to wear out. Significantly, Gulliver fashions new soles for his shoes from Yahoo skins, a quasi-cannibalistic act given his recognition of kinship. If the Yahoo are repulsive, the Houyhnhnm themselves are deeply flawed in terms of their incapacity to incorporate them, as this consequence of his internalisation of their ideology clearly conveys. The paradox is that in disassociating himself from the Yahoo, in trying to deny his own fleshliness by moulding himself on the Houyhnhnm, he turns into a 'brute', wearing 'human' hide. Upon his arrival back in England, he is unable to distinguish his wife and children from the Yahoo. He does not skin them, of course; only redirect his love toward his two horses, his ridiculous appropriation of the Houyhnhnm encapsulated in his adopted equine gait. When he returns home, Prendick is similarly unable to distinguish his fellow humans from the Beast People.

Returning to the figure of the transgressive scientist, Moreau looks back on his initial sensitivity to pain as an illness from which he recovered. He tells Prendick:

> 'You cannot imagine the strange colourless delight of these intellectual desires. The thing before you is no longer an animal, a fellow-creature, but a problem. Sympathetic pain – all I know of it I remember as a thing I used to suffer from years ago.' (p.73)

The way in which Moreau becomes desensitised to suffering was also one of the fears of the antivivisectionists. Carroll warned at an early stage in the vivisection debate that science was capable of exerting as strong a fascination 'as any form of pleasure to the most

refined sensualist' (quoted in Collins, p.346). Although Moreau would baulk at the suggestion of an analogy between his 'intellectual passion' on the one hand and the sensualism he identifies in terms of 'the mark of the beast' on the other, critics like Elaine Showalter have described his operating theatre as 'a dark version of Huysman's chamber or Lord Henry's salon, a place where he enjoys the exquisite sensations of science for science's sake'.[20] As Mason Harris argues, 'Moreau denies his own participation in the animality of the flesh, yet the obsessive intensity of his "delight" in his "intellectual desires" suggests a return of the animal nature he denies in the form of unconscious sadism'.[21] Lest we forget, Prendick becomes similarly desensitised on the island, which signals his own loss of humanity. 'So indurated was I at that time to the abomination of the place', he writes three quarters of the way through his narrative, 'that I heard without a touch of emotion the puma begin another day of torture. It met its persecutor with a shriek almost exactly like that of an angry virago' (p.95). The tortured cries of the vivisected puma previously drive him out of the enclosure, although the irony is that they are welcome after he is then pursued through the forest by the Leopard Man, for they sound his safe return. Wells seems to be suggesting that the capacity for sympathy is dependent upon one's own plight: it is a civilised luxury that is lost once the Darwinian pressure of survival comes to bear. Prendick presumably uses 'virago' in the derogatory sense of 'bad-tempered woman', although the term means 'heroic woman, female warrior' in Latin (*OED*). The puma makes the above 'shriek' moments before escaping from the laboratory, pursued by Moreau, whom the creature then kills; in other words, it is a kind of war cry.

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[20] Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p. 178. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[21] Mason Harris, 'Vivisection, the Culture of Science, and Intellectual Uncertainty in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *Gothic Studies*, 4: 2 (2002), pp. 100-115 (p. 107). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

According to Hendershot, the victory of the puma over Moreau is emphasised by the description of his corpse in terms of its gaping black wounds: 'Moreau's body has transformed into the physical color of the puma, black, and has become a literalization of his name, *moreau* being French for "jet black" or "black and shining"' (p.138). Moreau's consummate failure as a scientist is evidenced by the 'formless blackness' written across his own body. This transformation can also be read as a symbolic final act of disclosure – of the primitive within Moreau, the shared affinity with the puma that manifests itself in his 'savage science': and also that affinity with the 'puma' (Darwinian nature) that he himself acknowledges in the comment, 'To this day I have never troubled about the ethics of the matter. The study of Nature makes a man at last as remorseless as Nature' (p.73). As the black meaning of the name of the emphatically white Moreau suggests, the scientist is a thoroughly split subject, evidenced by his rational scientific discourse on the one hand and this acquired remorselessness on the other. Lastly, his French name also alludes to what is absent from his practice, morals. The Beast Men are the products of a degenerated science that has forgotten ethics. Moreau resembles the 'higher degenerate' like Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1902); 'someone who is excessively, dangerously, brilliant because endowed with intelligence which has evolved *too far*, and at the expense of other faculties, especially the ethical ones, which have correspondingly atrophied'.[22]

Showalter highlights the importance of the gender subtext of the novel, both with reference to the way Moreau separates creation from female sexuality by shaping animals into humans, and in terms of the 'strong element of sexual sadism in the story', that she suggests is evident in his operation upon the puma, 'a kind of New Woman figure, or

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[22] Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 145. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

shrieking sister' (pp.178-79). The way in which Moreau likens his laboratory to 'Bluebeard's Chamber' facilitates this reading. The fact that he does not use anaesthetic encapsulates his cruelty. His transgressive vivisection links him to the character of Doctor Benjulia in Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (1883), which, it has also been argued, 'link[s] the cruelties of vivisection with the horrors of sexual sadism' (Introduction, p.21). Benjulia studies brain disease, using his apparent chemical experiments as a front for his practice of vivisection, of which the blood stains on his walking stick are the tell-tale sign. The mystery that surrounds his locked laboratory, the animal cries from within and the idea of sensational exposure (Benjulia's anti-vivisection brother has uncovered his secret and plans to publish a book on him), are motifs that also appear in *Moreau*. Benjulia is the embodiment of the worse fears of the anti-vivisectionists. He even declares that he would be willing to partake in human vivisection were he able to get way with it. His obsessive scientific interest robs him of his human perspective, so that even when tickling a child, 'He observed her with as serious an interest as if he had been conducting a medical experiment' (p.96). By the end of the novel, he is shown to be incapable of distinguishing his female patient from his animal subjects. His integrity as a doctor utterly corrupted, he deliberately allows Carmina's life-threatening brain condition to worsen for the purpose of observation. However, his double-gendered name does signify an internal conflict between masculine science and feminine compassion that distinguishes him from the unfeeling Moreau. 'My last experiments on a monkey horrified me,' he tells his brother: 'His cries of suffering, his gestures of entreaty, were like the cries and gestures of a child. I would have given the world to put him out of his misery. But I went on' (p.191). At the same time, the

fact that he can continue in spite of the 'horror' that results from this blurring between the animal and the human, suggests something just as troubling as an absence of feeling.

The only thing that comes close to horrifying Moreau is the deficiencies of his creations that both sicken him with a sense of failure and make him determined to do better. As he tells Prendick,

> 'Each time I dip a living creature into the bath of burning pain, I say, This time I will burn out all the animal, this time I will make a rational creature of my own. After all, what is ten years? Man has been a hundred thousand in the making.' (p.76)

Harris suggests that, 'In his quest to extirpate all the animal he is trying to do evolution one better, to repeat the process this time with no animal inheritance remaining' (p.107). Notice the tactile suggestiveness of 'dip'. His hand is like a machine, one that purifies the flesh. This is also conveyed by the description of his operation on the few offspring of the Beast People that survive: 'When they lived, Moreau took them and stamped the human form upon them' (p.80). 'Stamped' also recalls the conclusion to *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871). Darwin states: 'We must, however, acknowledge, as it seems to me, that man with all his noble qualities, [...] still bears in his bodily frame the indelible stamp of his lowly origin'.[23] With this reference in mind, the use of the word 'stamped' to describe Moreau's practice is ironic because his 'stamp' is the opposite of 'indelible': 'the human form' he imposes is temporary not permanent. More to the point, this Darwinian idea of 'the indelible stamp', that 'the mark of the beast' is impossible to remove, indicates the futile nature of Moreau's scientific practice. He tampers with Darwinian evolutionary processes to accelerate animals into Beast Men but 'the stubborn

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[23] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (1871) (London: John Murray, 1901), Chapter xxi, p. 947.

beast flesh grows, day by day, back again,' as he tells Prendick (p.74). He attempts to make men but all the evidence suggests that species determinism will always force the creature to recapitulate: 'And they revert. As soon as my hand is taken from them, the beast begins to creep back, begins to assert itself again' (p.76). He is embarked upon an impossible project: 'beast flesh' can never be removed, and only temporarily suppressed. His refusal to countenance failure means that he is forever associated with the 'flesh' he defines himself against and works to eradicate. He can never truly assume the powers of divinity. The Beast Men are literally doomed from the beginning and are reflections of Moreau's own limitations. The fact that his scientific experiments are all too human, all too flawed, is the motive force behind the necessity of Law: Moreau must assume the role of Law-Giver (the God-like) in order to preserve bodily and civic order. Species determinism forces the creature to revert; therefore, the Law is a system of interdictions against reversion, a system which rests upon another system of 'Laws', those of Darwinian evolutionary theory. The paradox is that the Law is predicated upon the presence it seeks to exclude. Furthermore, Law is especially urgent because of his preferred choice of material. 'These animals without courage,' he says of his initial experiments on sheep, 'these fear-haunted pain-driven things, without a spark of pugnacious energy to face torment – they are not good for man-making' (p.73). Carnivores, he discovers, make the best 'men', though they also produce the most conflicted subjectivities, as shown by the behaviour of the feline Beast People. The inevitable reversion of these creations poses a potential threat both to the two scientists and to the community of the Beast People more generally.

## 1.3. The Law

### 1.3.1. Moreau as Law-Giver and Law-Enforcer

Moreau casts outs his creations but not before he has hypnotised them. As Montgomery explains to Prendick, 'they had certain Fixed Ideas implanted by Moreau in their minds [...] and these prohibitions were woven into the texture of their minds' (p.78). Jonathan Crary suggests that hypnosis at the turn of the century 'was a technology that offered at least the fantasy of rendering behaviour both automatic and predictable' and supports his argument with reference to Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), in which lower-class children are hypnotised in order to turn them into good workers.[24] What Wells refers to as 'psychic surgery' is also employed by Moreau and used for disciplinary purposes (quoted in Crary, p.68). Moreau hypnotises his creations in order to restrain their essential animal natures and turn them into docile bodies, albeit with limited success. It is these 'Fixed Ideas' that are chanted when Prendick is compelled to take part in a bizarre ceremony, having fled from the enclosure under the misapprehension that Moreau intends to vivisect him, and sort refuge in the community of the Beast Men:

> 'Not to go on all-Fours; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?'
> 'Not to suck up Drink; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?'
> 'Not to eat Flesh or Fish; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?'
> 'Not to claw Bark or Trees; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?' (p.57)

The Beast Men have developed their own religion based on the 'commandments' of Moreau whom they worship as their god. As critics have noted, the Law is partly a satire of Christianity. According to Hurley, 'In its ritualism, the beast people's religion parodies Catholicism [...]. And in its emphasis on prohibitions and punishment, and its worship of

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[24] Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge MA, and London: MIT Press, 2001), p. 68. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

an angry, vengeful deity, their religion parodies Calvinism' (p.107). Bearing in mind Prendick's ignorance of the Law and his misapprehension that these worshippers are human (note how the hut in which the ceremony is conducted is dark like the formless forest, Prendick only being able to make out the bestial faces of the 'congregation' after the song has finished), the scene is mockingly suggestive of a Christian service viewed from the outside: in turns, coercive, ridiculous and fearful.

In addition to the curbs on natural instincts listed above, the Law is also a prohibition on desire. Moreau attempts to preserve the distinction between beast and human by restricting the Beast People's sexuality. In a critique of late Victorian morality and social control, the Law sanctions desire within marriage. Monogamy is intended to constrain the animal desires that constantly threaten to degrade the human. Prendick recalls how the chant changes to the prohibition of 'the maddest, most impossible and most indecent things one could well imagine' in the above scene (p.57). The subsequent 'rhythmic fervour' of the ceremony is also suggestive of sublimated sexuality. 'Very much, indeed, of what we call moral education is such an artificial modification and perversion of instinct,' Moreau tells Prendick a little later, 'suppressed sexuality [is trained] into religious emotion' (p.71). This 'suppressed sexuality' resurfaces when the Law falls apart after Moreau's death. The violation of the prohibition on desire provokes a disgusted reaction in Prendick:

> Some of them – the pioneers, I noticed with some surprise, were all females – began to disregard the injunction of decency – deliberately for the most part. Others even attempted public outrages upon the institution of monogamy. The tradition of the Law was clearly losing its force. I cannot pursue this disagreeable subject.[25] (p.121)

[25] According to Hurley, 'female sexuality both instantiates and aggravates the reversion to animality, such that it can almost be said to stand in metaphoric relation to the animality of the human species': 'almost' because

Prendick's observation that sexual regression begins with the females is one of the few references in the narrative to the existing Beast Women – a Swine Woman, a Wolf Woman, a Mare-Rhinoceros Woman and a Fox-Bear Woman, as well as some others of uncertain origin – who are textually marginalised. Prendick's sense of 'surprise' stems from the contradiction of an earlier observation concerning their heightened sense of decency and decorum, one that reproduces 'the commonplace Victorian wisdom that men are innately aggressive in their sexual drives, while women embody modesty and passivity'.[26]

Prendick's inability to continue with the topic of the sexual regression of the Beast People is similar to the way in which he has previously silenced Montgomery. In another echo of *Jekyll and Hyde*, Montgomery tells Prendick how 'I lost my head for ten minutes on a foggy night' (p.17). The 'shabby vice' is serious enough to warrant Montgomery's flight from England but the reader does not find out what has happened because Prendick encourages him to stifle his confession (p.104). Despite Prendick's Utterson-like propensity to frequent 'eccentric company', the absence of his curiosity in this instance is most unlike the lawyer, as we shall consider in the next chapter (p.15). 'I was not curious to learn what might have driven a young medical student out of London', writes Prendick, his imagination recoiling from the thought (p.18). Whereas Utterson appeals to his trustworthiness in the attempt to extract a confession from Jekyll on the subject of his relations with Hyde, Prendick raises the possibility of his indiscretion and the spectre of scandal in order to silence Montgomery: 'it is better to keep your secret,' he tells him.

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Prendick's observation about the females represents the forlorn attempt to displace animality onto the female and thereby preserve his own humanity (p. 123).

[26] Joseph Bristow, *Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 28. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

'There's nothing gained but a little relief, if I respect your confidence. If I don't...well?' (p.18). We know that this is a ruse because three pages earlier, Prendick prudently edits his report of Montgomery's spat with Captain Davies ('Well, never mind what he called Montgomery'), which promotes speculation even as it pretends to do the opposite (p.15). The unspeakable nature of Montgomery's indiscretion hints at homosexuality, as critics like Hurley have suggested: but like Jekyll and Hyde's unspecified transgressions, the gap can be filled with a range of unlicensed desires, one as extensive perhaps as the 'long list' forbidden by Moreau's Law (p.57). When Moreau is killed and the system of Law threatens to implode, much to Prendick's disdain, Montgomery falls to pieces. 'You've made a beast of yourself,' he tells the drunken Montgomery. 'To the beasts you may go' (p.105). Prendick's barbed dismissal is a culmination of the disgust the man provokes in him. Indeed, he is suspected of species miscegenation. Moreau has hinted as much at one point. 'He's ashamed of it,' says the Doctor, 'but I believe he half-likes some of these beasts' (p.76). The point is that Montgomery does not regard them as 'beasts' but 'as almost normal human beings', having been working in Moreau's employ for ten years, only occasionally exposed to other humans and even then only to the likes of Davis (p.81). 'Several times I let him go alone among them', writes Prendick, before adding pointedly, 'I avoided intercourse with them in every possible way' (p.95). Significantly, we twice see Montgomery in bestial couplings towards the end of the narrative, the first when Prendick shoots a Beast Man and Montgomery is pulled on top of the creature in its death-throes, the second when the Sayer fatally attacks him. Again, Prendick shoots and Montgomery is found dead with the creature sprawled across him.

Returning to the Law, the fact that these limits on instinctual behaviour strike Prendick as 'idiotic' is ironic, given his own near cannibalism and his subsequent consumption of blood (p.56). The irony is spelt out when the Sayer of the Law ponders upon which prohibition the new arrival will break:

> 'What you will want, we do not know. We shall know. Some want to follow things that move, to watch and slink and wait and spring, to kill and bite, bite deep and rich, sucking the blood... It is bad. 'Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. *Are we not Men*'?' (p.58)

In other words, the most important rule on the island is intended to militate against the kind of breakdown of communal bonds that occurs in the dinghy of the *Lady Vain*. The Sayer points to the inevitability of the Law being broken ('We shall know'), which is indicative of its innate cruelty, as well as the built-in failure of Moreau's own project. The Beast Men are punished for their violation of the prohibitions they are biologically predisposed to break. Hurley suggests that the Sayer emphasises the prohibition on hunting 'with a certain wistful nostalgia' but this is an understatement (p.107). The Sayer's human or civilised veneer is evidently under strain; indeed, it will eventually crack. The point in this instance is that the articulation of the prohibition evidently incites the desire it is intended to thwart, another contradiction which highlights the dysfunctional nature of the system. Furthermore, so fragile is it that Prendick is the catalyst for its implosion. The Saying of the Law above is interrupted by 'the dark figure and awful white face of Moreau', as if God has descended (p.59). This precipitates a full-scale man-hunt as Prendick runs for his life with the howling mob of Beast Men in pursuit. Backed into the sea, he plays what he thinks is his last card by encouraging the islanders to revolt: 'I went on shouting [...]. That Moreau and Montgomery could be killed; that they were not to be feared: that was the burthen of what I put into the heads of the Beast People to my own ultimate undoing' (p.65). 'Undoing'

refers to Prendick's position on the island but also to his own bodily dissolution after he has joined the Beast People.

The Law attempts to preserve the distinction between 'Beast' and 'Man' ('Are we not Men?') but these very prohibitions assert an anxiety-provoking continuum between both states of being; after all, if there was no anxiety, there would be no need for the Law. The Law also fails as a self-sustaining system because it constantly requires the performance of the interdiction. Moreau's 'Fixed Ideas' leave his subjects at war within, the Law 'battl[ing] in their minds with the deep-seated, ever rebellious cravings of their animal natures', and the struggle is endlessly fought and lost (p.79). They are trapped in a perpetual cycle of 'saying' the Law and transgressing it. In the first instance, the Law requires anxious rituals of enunciation – 'Are we not Men?' – that bring the Beast Men into being as subjects, a performative act of speech they constantly have to repeat 'encouraged' by the Sayer. In the second instance, the Beast Men succumb to their cravings in a kind of internalised cannibalism, usually at night, when the animal (especially the feline), is at its most dominant.

Another reason why the Law fails as a self-sustaining system is because it constantly requires the presence of Moreau as Law-Giver and Law-Enforcer, which drags the scientist away from his research. As Montgomery states after the discovery of a half-eaten rabbit: 'Much the brutes care for the Law, eh – when Moreau's not about?' (p.85). This is partly why the Law falls apart upon his death; without his presence to validate its interdictions, it ceases to have operational force. At one point in the ceremony, it occurs to Prendick 'that Moreau, after animalising these men, had infected their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself' (p.57). Of course, if some of Moreau's 'Fixed Ideas'

intended to ensure the obedience of the Beast Men are of his omnipotence, these 'Ideas' set a kind of deadline for the termination of the system and the dissolution of the Beast Men: when Moreau dies and the Ideas are exposed as myth; unless that is, one myth can be substituted for another and the system can be bolstered, which is exactly what Prendick tries to do after his death. Aware of the impending disaster, Prendick tries to convince the Beast Men that Moreau is still alive and watching them from above, one of the narrator's more practical or cynical misapprehensions.

Having failed to assume the powers of divinity, the scientist is reluctantly incorporated into a system of his own design, one which he is required to masquerade as God. And violence is the supplement of Law. The Sayer repeatedly emphasises the terrible nature of the punishment meted out to those who break the Law. The Ape Man testifies to the truth of what the Sayer has to say: 'I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great, he is good!'(p.58). Moreau has taken the Ape Man back to the laboratory and immersed him in 'the bath of burning pain'. He effectively tortures him back into speech and the assumption of a quasi-human subjectivity. Moreau's suppression of instinctual behaviour is utterly compromised by its own sadistic operation. Prendick describes one such occasion when Moreau is forced out of his isolation in the laboratory in order to enforce the Law, with respect to the reverting Leopard Man. Turning the Law into a spectacle in which he performs the role of vengeful Creator, he gathers the Beast Men with a blast from his horn in a kind of 'natural amphitheatre', where they demonstrate their subservience as subjects of the Law (p.87). Writes Prendick:

> As soon as they had approached within a distance of perhaps thirty yards they halted, and bowing on knees and elbows, began flinging the white dust upon

> their heads. Imagine the scene if you can. We three blue-clad men, with our misshapen black-faced attendant, standing in a wide expanse of sunlit yellow dust under the blazing blue sky, and surrounded by this circle of crouching and gesticulating monstrosities, some almost human, save in their subtle expression and gestures, some like cripples, some so strangely distorted as to resemble nothing but the denizens of our wildest dreams. (p.87)

Moreau dramatically halts their recital of the Law on the appropriate prohibition, punctuating his demand to know the identity of the transgressor with a crack of his whip, adding to the sense of performance. Seed notes that 'the whip strikes an appropriately grotesque note of the circus' (p.9). Moreau's ignoble Creator-figure is a kind of ringmaster, his whip symbolic of the cruelty of the Law. In an obvious echo of Kipling's Mowgli, Moreau picks out the guilty party and proceeds to dominate him using his powerful eyes in what is tantamount to a spiritual rape: 'Moreau looked into the eyes of the Leopard Man', recalls the stunned narrator, 'and seemed to be dragging the very soul out of the creature' (p.89). Prendick is an ambivalent onlooker. He refers to the Leopard Man alternately as 'victim' and 'criminal' (p.89). It is just this ambivalence or ideological hesitancy that prevents him from stepping into Moreau's shoes after his death and saving the system of Law.

Emboldened by Prendick's shouts of revolt the previous day, the creature attacks Moreau when he looks away and flees, prompting another collective violation of the Law as the Beast Men give chase. Having been hunted twice himself, the roles are reversed as Prendick becomes caught up in it, another temporary eclipse of his civilised self, further suggested by the way in which his clothes are torn in the process and how he is described as 'panting' (p.91). His perception of the quarry is typically inconsistent, nonhuman one moment ('thing' (p.90)), human the next ('he'), the contradiction condensed into a final paradox as the Leopard Man is cornered, Prendick's most contrary misapprehension:

'seeing the creature there in a perfectly animal attitude, with the light gleaming in its eyes, and its imperfectly human face distorted with terror, I realised again the fact of its humanity' (p.92). His recognition of the Leopard Man's 'humanity' (qualified oxymoronically by 'its') when the creature is most recognisably animal, is an inversion of Moreau's gaze: the scientist would see only a 'fear-haunted pain-driven thing' (p.73). Consequently, Prendick takes the Law into his own hands, shooting the Leopard Man between the eyes in order to spare the creature from further torture in the so-called House of Pain. The recognition of human identity triggers its obliteration. It is a mercy-killing, just as Prendick and Montgomery destroy the remaining creatures in the laboratory after Moreau's death.

Yet the act says something else about Prendick, its explosive violence drawing attention to the fact that it is also a kind of abrupt looking away. Just as Frankenstein rushes away from the Creature because he cannot bear what he sees (himself), Prendick destroys the face of the Leopard Man because he sees himself reflected in it. The flip-side of his recognition of the creature's humanity is the silent recognition of his own animality, which he urgently represses. What appears to be a humanitarian gesture then, is also the measure of his ongoing revulsion towards the Beast Men. His instinctive aversion towards them was identified at the beginning and it can be explained in terms of the way in which they confront him with certain truths that cannot be acknowledged about his own identity; that he, too, is a fragmented subject, or type of Beast Man.

As the two scientists continue to restore order among the Beast Men, who have crowded round the dead body of the Leopard Man, Prendick slips away on his own and continues to view the gathering from afar, the emotion of the moment combined with the

change in perspective leading to a further misapprehension that concludes in dark Darwinian abstraction. It is no longer the barely imaginable spectacle that follows the blast of the horn but something altogether more recognisable. 'A strange persuasion came upon me', recalls Prendick, 'that I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature' (p.93). The island is a reflection of the world at large stripped to its basics: and one driven by 'a vast pitiless mechanism' that is like Moreau in its cosmic draping as it 'cut[s] and shape[s] the fabric of existence', but which the scientist himself is subject to, reflected in his inability to defeat the beast flesh and his ultimate destruction by one of his own beast-patients (p.94).

The episode with the Leopard Man prompts a despairing assessment of Moreau's Law, in the light of Prendick's misapprehension, a lament for the human condition. The 'laughter and disgust' (p.57) formerly aroused by the Sayers has given way to a compassion for their plight:

> Poor brutes! I began to see the viler aspect of Moreau's cruelty. I had not thought before of the pain and trouble that came to these poor victims after they had passed from Moreau's hands. I had shivered only at the actual days of torment in the enclosure. But now that seemed to be the lesser part. Before they had been beasts, their instincts fitly adapted to their surroundings, and happy as living things may be. Now they stumbled in the shackles of humanity, lived in a fear that never died, fretted by a law they could not understand; their mock-human existence began in agony, was one long internal struggle, one long dread of Moreau – and for what? It was the wantonness that stirred me. (p.93)

Earlier, we noted Prendick's misapprehension of the Beast Men as human but racially other, and the way in which the colonial rhetoric is replaced by that of species difference with the identification of the mark of the beast. Here, the colonial resurfaces in the service of species difference ('the shackles of humanity') in order to characterise the oppressive nature of Moreau's science, the fact that 'human' identity is a form of enslavement.

Furthermore, as the imagery of the Beast Men prostrating and whitening themselves before Moreau suggests, that colonisation is replicated in the system of Law itself. In other words, while Prendick's initial reading of the Beast Men as colonial subjects is incorrect, it nonetheless points to the island's true power structure, with the scientist / colonialist in control. The remainder of the novel shall now be considered before we return to the issue of Law with reference to Wells, Kipling and Conrad.

When Moreau is killed, Prendick fails to seize control and in search of food and shelter joins the Beast Men. On the one hand, this is a failure of courage: Moreau's principle man-making ingredient, the implication being that Prendick is inferior evolutionary material, like the sheep the scientist first practices on and either kills or discards, with Prendick even describing himself at the end of his narrative as 'like a sheep stricken with the gid' (p.129). On the other hand, there is an egalitarian impulse in Prendick. Deep down he knows that he is the same as the Beast Men and he quickly falls in with their ways: 'a thousand things that seemed unnatural and repulsive', he recalls at one point, 'speedily became natural and ordinary'; in part, because he has become used to them (p.82). The two scientists are 'too peculiar and individual' to remind him of what men ought to look like and as with Gulliver, he discovers that normality is less a biological given than a question of perspective, coming round to the Beast Men's point of view that his thighs not theirs are disproportionate for example, as Seed notes (Swift, p.82; Seed, p.9).

After a month or so, however, Prendick starts to notice changes in the Beast Men, in terms of speech, manual dexterity and posture, the code of prohibitions being broken one by one. In Moreau's words, the stubborn beast flesh creeps back again. It has been their

ability to use language that has distinguished the Beast Men as human, that has enabled them to re-enunciate their human identity. 'Can you imagine language', writes Prendick, 'once clear-cut and exact, softening and guttering, losing shape and import, becoming mere lumps of sound again?' (p.120). Without Moreau's validating presence, the Law, and its system of interdictions against reversion, crumbles. With order breaking down, the Beast Men devolve:

> It would be impossible to detail every step of the lapsing of these monsters; to tell how, day by day, the human semblance left them; how they gave up bandagings and wrappings, abandoned at last every stitch of clothing; how the hair began to spread over the exposed limbs; how their foreheads fell away and their faces projected. (p.121)

Prendick's earlier sympathy for the plight of the Beast Men, articulated from within the safety of the system of Law, vanishes as 'the shackles of humanity' are released and they revert to a wild state: and Prendick *lapses* or devolves with them. 'I too must have undergone strange changes', he writes, 'My clothes hung about me as yellow rags, through whose rents glowed the tanned skin. My hair grew long, and became matted together' (p.122). The stubborn beast flesh grows back. Prendick returns home to Britain but this does not signal an end to his island horror, for all he can see in the faces of his fellow humans is the animal rising to the surface: 'None [...] have the calm authority of a reasonable soul. I feel as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale' (p.128).

### 1.3.2. Kipling's Law of the Jungle

Prendick's initial encounter with the Law, when he spots the three Swine People engaged in the strange ceremony, playfully trails its literary source.[27] Their recitation includes the refrain 'Aloola' or 'Baloola', he cannot quite work out which (p.40). 'Baloo' is the bear who teaches 'the Law of the Jungle' in Kipling's *The Jungle Books* (1894-5) ('M'ling' is an abbreviation of 'manling', one of the terms used to describe Mowgli).[28] Wells rewrites his role in terms of the Sayer of the Law, whose physical appearance is partly based upon the Silver Man in 'The Mark of the Beast'. The Law in each novel prescribes a code of behaviour and manifests itself as a hierarchical system intended to militate against chaos, but in other respects the two appear to contrast sharply. Kipling's Law is natural or self-generating, as the word 'Jungle' indicates, and the majority of animals willingly adhere to its rules. The result is both a coherent subject and a stable communal identity, the Jungle-People. The code caters for the basic needs of the animals and smoothes the passage of daily life: for example, the rules that apply to the wolves encourage them to avoid conflict with other powerful species and between packs if possible, establish domestic boundaries and organise the division of food. It was previously considered how Moreau's Law fails as a self-sustaining system in its constant requirement of the performance of the interdiction and the presence of Moreau (as Law-Giver and Law-Enforcer). In fact, Moreau's position as Creator-figure unbalances the system from the very beginning because his originating presence presupposes that the Law is not a pre-existent 'natural' system, but that it is code of prohibitions introduced by a Creator figure, which is

[27] For a discussion of the influence of the *Jungle Books* on Wells, see Robert L. Platzner, 'H. G. Wells's *Jungle Book*: The Influence of Kipling on *The Island of Doctor Moreau*', *The Victorian Newsletter* 36 (Fall 1969), pp. 19-22.

[28] Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books*, (1894/5) (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 51. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

partly why the Law falls apart upon his death. Unlike the Jungle-People, the Beast Men are obviously ill-at-ease with a Law they are incapable of keeping and which is violently enforced from above. They are not only conflicted subjects but form a browbeaten beast-community more generally.

Kipling prefaces the opening chapter of the first book with 'Night-Song in the Jungle':

> This is the hour of pride and power,
> Talon and tush and claw.
> Oh, hear, the call! – Good hunting all
> That keep the Jungle Law! (p.11)

It anticipates the introduction of the Hunting-People, who stand at the top of the system prior to Mowgli's arrival, bound fraternally by the watchword, 'We be of one blood, ye and I' (p.33). The Law belongs to the predatory powerful. It should be stated that the *Jungle Books* do not produce a coherent and stable metaphorical structure. The Hunting-People perform a colonial role by rearing or civilising the Indian Mowgli, but they more obviously represent the colonial subjects Mowgli will then rule over in his colonial role. At the same time, the Hunting-People clearly resemble a kind of alliance of colonial powers here. The 'jungle' is divided up between them: or rather it has organised itself into this division because that is the 'natural' order of things; colonialism is naturalised. In this respect, the Law is a system which rests upon another system of 'Laws': Social Darwinism. Herbert Spencer, as Baker notes,

> coined the phrase 'survival of the fittest', and in his hands 'fittest' became not best adapted, but strongest. [...] Natural selection had 'proved' the Caucasian 'race' to be the fittest, a view that provides a fine rationale for racism, imperialism, and even slavery. (p.200)

Kipling softens the horror of life at the bottom of the system for the predated upon by characterising survival for them as a game, 'that life-and-death fun' of trying to outwit the carnivore (p.156). Survival for the Hunting-People is less a question of Darwinian competition, than of the cooperation the code of behaviour enjoins: for example, a warning must be issued when hunting grounds are changed. In metaphorical terms, the alliance internalises the Law of restraint to avoid damaging conflict between themselves, and channels their aggression towards the potential colonial peoples. 'Night-Song' echoes Tennyson's description of Darwinian nature, 'red in tooth and claw' (*In Memoriam*, 1842, Canto 56) and 'law of the jungle' has come to mean a state of ruthless struggle, but as the last two lines of the verse suggest, the Law of the Jungle balances predation and prohibition. The code licenses predation in the sense of permitting carnivorous appetite within certain limits and thus prevents the conflicted subjectivity that would result from its suppression, and also the predatory chaos that would be unleashed were it unrestrained: the bleak alternatives thematised by Wells in the form of the cruelty and violence of the Law on the one hand, and the anarchy that follows its breakdown on the other, after Moreau has been killed and the Beast Men prey upon one another. Nevertheless, there are some animals among the Hunting-People whose appetites exceed license and thereby threaten to destabilise the jungle.

The emphasis on obedience in 'Night-Song', reiterated throughout the two books, suggests a fear of chaos; the anxiety that the Law of the Jungle will not be kept. In fact, *The Jungle Book* opens with the troublemaking jackal, Tabaqui, who is prone to catapulting through the forest and biting indiscriminately, maddened by the taste of blood. This is regarded as a shameful loss of control by the Hunting-People, one to which they are all

potentially susceptible and that the Law guards against. Tabaqui brings news of the Law-Breaker, Shere Khan. The tiger has not only changed his hunting grounds unannounced but has been stalking a human, the child Mowgli, which violates the code's strictest injunction. The fact of this violation or Lawlessness intimates the need for Mowgli in a sense. Rescued from the tiger by the wolves that then adopt and raise him, Mowgli will ensure order when he becomes 'the master of the jungle' (p.205). Under Father Wolf's tutelage, he learns to decipher the jungle until it means 'as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man', an image that encapsulates Kipling's systematic conception of the jungle, less exotic than mundane, a fact confirmed in Mowgli's education by Baloo (p.19). The jungle becomes a classroom in which Mowgli learns by rote and is cuffed for his disobedience. At the same time, an enmity develops between Shere Khan and Mowgli, with the tiger turning the young wolves against him. The consequence of this revolt is that their system falls apart. Kipling carefully details the ill effects of this instance of the Law's collapse. Mowgli finally kills Shere Khan, puts the tiger's skin on display and summons the rebellious wolves. Those physically capable of attendance are lame, limping or malnourished and declare, 'we be sick of this lawlessness' (p.71).

Shere Khan has managed to turn the young wolves against Mowgli by exploiting the fact of his difference; that he is human despite his animal upbringing. Mowgli's own sense of self-division or duality clouds the actual moment of triumph over the tiger: '[the village and jungle] fight together in me as the snakes fight in the spring. [...] I am two Mowglis' (p.74). His conflicted subjectivity is resolved at the end of the second book, when he articulates his native name – 'I am Nathoo' – but this resolution is somewhat forced and reflects Kipling's desire to tie things up more than anything (p.316). Ironically, Mowgli's

rejection by the wolves because he is human is followed by his rejection by the villagers because he is 'a wolf' (p.69). His perceived sameness to the jungle community from which he has come prohibits his (re)integration. Mowgli is excluded from the village to which he belongs because of the animal self he has acquired in the jungle, which has excluded him because of his original human self: a human self that means he may never be a whole subject in the jungle, but which does allow him to assume a position at the top of the system. According to John A. McClure, 'To be above yet to belong, to be obeyed as a god and loved as a brother, this is Kipling's dream for the imperial ruler, a dream that Mowgli achieves'.[29] Mowgli's sense of conflicted subjectivity indicates that this is not the case for him. 'To be above yet to belong' is simply not possible: these are mutually exclusive subject positions. The difference that leads to his exclusion is also what gives him his superiority over those who have excluded him. For example, it is the humanity exploited by Shere Khan that enables him to become the master of the jungle, the assumption of which position reinforces the difference that is symbolised by his powerful gaze: 'He is wise and well-taught, and above all he has the eyes that make the Jungle-People afraid' (p.39).[30] As is the case with Dracula, Mowgli's eyes are the source of his power and he uses them like weapons on occasions. In the following incident, Mowgli asserts his authority over his fellow wolf cubs:

> They looked uneasily, and when their eyes wandered, he called them back again and again, till their hair stood up all over their bodies, and they trembled in every limb, while Mowgli stared and stared.
>
> 'Now,' said he, 'of us five, which is leader?'

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[29] John A. McClure, *Kipling & Conrad: The Colonial Fiction* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 60. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[30] According to McClure, 'What Mowgli does with his eyes reveals his true identity to be that of a spy, for while he uses them to take in the many secrets revealed in good faith by his jungle brothers, he keeps them closed to the animal's gaze'. "The mouth is angry," observes Bagheera during another contest with Mowgli, "but the eyes say nothing"' (p. 63).

> 'Thou art leader, little Brother,' said Grey Brother, and he licked Mowgli's foot.
>
> 'Follow, then,' said Mowgli, and the Four followed at his heels with their tails between their legs.
>
> 'This comes of living with the man pack,' said Bagheera, slipping down after them. 'There is more in the jungle now than Jungle Law, Baloo.' (pp.190-191)

Moreau's domination of the Leopard Man clearly recalls the way in which Mowgli makes Bagheera the object of his imperial gaze a few pages later:

> Once more Mowgli stared, as he had stared at the rebellious cubs, full into the beryl-green eyes [...] till the eyes dropped, and the big head with them – dropped lower and lower, and the red rasp of a tongue grated on Mowgli's instep.
>
> 'Brother – Brother – Brother!' the boy whispered. (p.201)

According to McClure, 'When we imagine the scene, the fully grown panther abasing himself before the fierce-eyed child, it is impossible to reconcile the deed with the words, the enforced humiliation with the rhetoric of intimate equality' (p.62). Although it is relatively understated in these examples, force is the supplement of Law. In this way, Mowgli brings the animals to book – or disciplines the unruly colonial subjects. Returning to the issue of his duality then, if one Mowgli is the colonialist, then the second Mowgli is the one who 'goes native' in the jungle. As Don Randall notes, 'Caught between two opposing worlds, divided in his identifications and affiliations, he can be read as a fabulous, idealized analogue of the sociocultural in-betweenness of an India-born Englishman (like Rudyard Kipling)'.[31]

Kipling demonstrates the desirability or necessity of Law through his depiction, not only of the destructive consequences that follow its breakdown, but the anarchy that exists in its absence from the beginning. Such is the case with the uncivilised Monkey-People, or *Bandar-log*, who live in the tree-tops, symbolically out of the reach of Law. The panther

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[31] Don Randall, *Kipling's Imperial Boy: Adolescence and Cultural Hybridity* (London: Palgrave, 2000), p. 73.

Bagheera contemptuously describes them as 'the people without a Law – the eaters of everything.'(p.34). In fact, without 'a Law' to bring their subjectivity into being, they remain incomplete subjects, not quite 'people' in the way that other 'animals' like Baloo or Bagheera evidently are. With no language of their own, of limited attention span and memory, the Monkey-People merely 'ape' or imitate the Jungle-People and inhabit a depthless and momentary realm. As the emphasis on consumption suggests, either eating too much or what they should not, they are a further manifestation of the bodily or 'Yahoo': according to Baloo, 'evil, dirty, shameless,' that which must be cast out (p.35). The bear is disgusted to find out at one point that Mowgli has been fraternising with the Monkey-People. Mowgli sees himself mirrored back in them: 'They stand on their feet as I do' (p.35). This is a misapprehension because Mowgli is human, although it is accurate on a metaphorical level because of the analogy he himself makes between the villagers, from whom he comes, and the Monkey-People. That said, there is little sense of him being a native Indian in the books. At the same time, his jungle education also distinguishes him from the villagers and restores the suggestion of misapprehension. The point is that he does not consistently recognise himself but comes in and out of different subjectivities.

It is significant that it is the monkeys that are depicted as other to the Jungle-People. Baker notes how after *The Origin of Species*, 'Our closest relatives, the great apes were then seen as our immediate ancestors' (p.199).[32] As Mowgli himself says, 'Men are blood brothers of the *Bandar-log*' (p.198). There is arguably an evolutionary horror at work beneath the beast fable. Through the civilised Baloo and Bagheera, the text articulates a revulsion at what humans have evolved from and therefore might slide back into; hence, the

[32] Baker continues, '(a mistaken view, for in the Darwinian model, both *homo sapiens* and primates are derived from a common ancestor very far back in time)' (p. 199).

necessity of the Law. The Monkey-People may live above the Jungle People but they are lower down the evolutionary ladder than them. The Jungle People can also be read as colonial subjects that have been successfully civilised by white rule, while the 'savage' Monkey-People are colonial subjects that have not, bearing in mind that Mowgli's reference to 'men' in the previous quotation actually refers to the Indian villagers and in the light of which the ultimate fate of the Monkey-People is especially chilling. Before it is considered, a further reading of the Monkey-People can be suggested, one which draws on George Orwell's observation about the reference to 'lesser breeds without the Law' in his poem 'Recessional', published to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.[33] 'This line is always good for a snigger in pansy-left circles', suggests Orwell:

> It is assumed as a matter of course that the 'lesser breeds' are 'natives', and a mental picture is called up of some *pukka sahib* in a pith helmet kicking a coolie. In its context the sense of the line is almost the exact opposite of this. The phrase 'lesser breeds' almost certainly refers to the Germans, and especially the pan-German writers, who are 'without the Law' in the sense of being lawless, not in the sense of being powerless.[34]

Mowgli spells out the analogy between the villagers and the Lawless Monkey-People, but the latter can also be read in terms of a rogue or degenerate imperial power, one that operates outside the aforementioned suggestion of the league.

According to Alan Sandison, Kipling perceives the world as 'without intrinsic order: chaos and anarchy constitute its true moral reality. [...] The best that can be done is to encourage anything that offers to impose pattern and order upon this lawless nature,

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[33] For a discussion of the Diamond Jubilee with reference to Britain's imperial status, see Denis Judd, 'Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897: Unashamed Triumphalism or Whistling in the Dark?' in Tracey Hill (ed.), *Decadence & Danger: Writing, History and the Fin de Siècle* (Bath: Sulis Press, 1997), pp. 27-45.
[34] Andrew Rutherford (ed.), *Kipling's Mind and Art* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965), p. 71.

however artificial such structures may innately be'.[35] As was noted with reference to the Hunting-People, it is a trait of the Law of the Jungle that it purports to be a natural structure, which thereby rationalises the ideology of power. In *The Outline of History* (1920) Wells reflects, 'It was quite characteristic of the times [the late nineties] that Mr. Kipling should lead the children of the middle and upper-class British public back to the Jungle to learn "the law"': 'characteristic' in that it was the era of the New Imperialism ('This is the hour of pride and power'), but also 'characteristic' in terms of the way in which colonialism was naturalised.[36] One of the ways in which we can read the Law in *Moreau* is as a critique of Kipling's Jungle Law, a point to which we shall return.[37] Suffice to say that Wells exposes the artificial nature of the allegedly natural structure and unmasks the ideology of power through the depiction of Moreau's tyrannical regime. In *The Jungle Books* 'lawless nature' erupts in the form of seditious figures like Shere Khan, the Monkey-People and the Red Dog, which requires a cycle of Law-Enforcement. The transgressors never threaten to destroy the system, merely pose sufficient threat to facilitate its renewal and the reassurance that follows. The paradox is that without these eruptions Kipling would not be able to demonstrate the subsequent enforcement. This interdependence makes Kipling beholden to the Lawlessness he fears and would banish but must resuscitate. More to the point, violence is the supplement of Law, the fact of which Wells underscores in *Moreau*. The stripped and displayed skin of Shere Khan is testament to this. Mowgli also obliterates his village with the aid of the elephant herd in 'Letting in the Jungle' from the

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[35] Alan Sandison, 'Introduction', in Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901), ed. by Alan Sandison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xiii.

[36] H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* in *Rudyard Kipling: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Roger Lancelyn Green (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 306. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[37] Also see Roger Bozzetto, 'Moreau's Tragi-Farcical Island', *Science Fiction Studies* 20 (1993), pp. 34-44.

second book. As for the Monkey-People, they are devoured en-masse as punishment for the kidnap of Mowgli. He is rescued by Baloo, Bagheera and the snake Kaa, another *fin-de-siècle* character equipped with a powerful mesmeric gaze. The episode concludes with 'the Dance of the Hunger of Kaa', in which the snake mesmerises the monkeys, who are then commanded to walk one by one into his gaping jaws (p.52). Kipling thinks up an ironically 'appropriate' punishment for the 'eaters of everything', for they are themselves consumed. Behaviour attributed to the Lawless Monkey-People is revealed to be the behaviour of the Lawful also, only on an even greater scale. It is a massacre – or genocide in light of the analogy between the Monkey-People and the villagers. Law-Enforcement operates through predation, which threatens to exceed the Law because Baloo and Bagheera are also mesmerised and in danger of being eaten themselves. This is a diversionary tactic by Kipling, intended to draw attention away from the punishment, by shifting the focus from the hapless Monkey-People onto the two Jungle-People. Kipling blocks or redirects the reader's gaze at the moment of execution, as if he cannot bear them to see the excessive violence of the Law which jeopardises the distinction between the Lawful and the Lawless. Relief follows when the two are rescued by Mowgli, who is unaffected by the mesmeric power of the snake's gaze. This redirection may indicate a kind of paternalistic awareness of the child reader, although Kipling does something similar at the end of 'The Mark of the Beast', which we shall consider shortly.

Prendick's misapprehension of the Beast Men as colonial subjects, in conjunction with the island's hierarchical power structure, invites us to (mis)read *Moreau* as an imperial allegory. As J. R. Hammond notes in '*The Island of Doctor Moreau*: A Swiftian Parable',

> When the Beast People are confronted by men they grovel on all fours flinging 'white dust' in their faces; they are ordered to salute and bow down. This

> interplay between black and white is an important subsidiary theme in the novel and it is not too fanciful to see in this a presage of the end of empire. Moreau's island is a microcosm of white domination, and the collapse of his rule an interesting anticipation of the decline of imperialism.[38]

Such a reading adds to the thematic links we have established with *Gulliver's Travels* and *Frankenstein*, in which both narrators articulate a strong anti-colonial or anti-imperial sentiment, and is suggestive of the way in which the text anticipates some of the themes in *Heart of Darkness*, in addition to Wells's own *War of the Worlds* (1898) ('we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought').[39] In *The Outline of History* Wells continues by recalling an incident from *Stalky and Co.* (1899), showing an insight into the relation between law and violence in Kipling that can be read back into *Moreau*. The torture of two boys by their peers is justified on account of their being bullies: 'Before resorting to torture, the teaching seems to be, see that you pump up a little moral indignation, and all will be well. If you have the authorities on your side, then you cannot be to blame' (p.307). In addition, the torture is implicitly sanctioned by the authority figures of clergyman and headmaster. In this last instance, writes Wells, 'we have the key to the ugliest, most regressive, and finally fatal idea of modern imperialism; the idea of a tacit conspiracy between the law and illegal violence' (p.307). In other words, it is not fanciful to read Moreau's Law, in its evident constructedness, top-down operation of power and especially in the sheer visibility of violence as its supplement, as a kind of demystification or critique of the Jungle Law, the point being that Law only exists with the power to enforce it.

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[38] J. R. Hammond '*The Island of Doctor Moreau*: A Swiftian Parable', *The Wellsian* 16 (1993), pp. 30-41 (p. 40).

[39] H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine and War of the Worlds* (London: Gollancz, 2002), p.101.

### 1.3.3. 'Illegal Violence': 'The Mark of the Beast'

The torture scene is different in 'The Mark of the Beast' in the sense that there is no 'tacit conspiracy' as such; it is only a question of 'illegal violence'. After Fleete's transformation into a beast, Strickland and the narrator call the doctor but his case is beyond the scope of conventional western medicine; Dumoise diagnoses a fatal case of 'hydrophobia' and departs. 'I shall take the law into my own hands,' Strickland tells the narrator, 'I order you to help me' (p.204). The narrator accedes to the moral authority of Strickland that the nature of the request simultaneously undermines. Their recourse to extralegal means mirrors the Silver Man, in the sense that he is not the agent of the law but of semi-divine retribution. Having captured the leper, the men resolve to torture him until he lifts the curse from Fleete:

> 'I think I was right,' said Strickland. 'Now we will ask him to cure this case.'
>
> But the leper only mewed. Strickland wrapped a towel round his hand and took the gun barrels out of the fire. I put the half of the broken walking stick through the loop of the fishing-line and buckled the leper comfortably to Strickland's bedstead. I understand then how men and women and little children can endure to see a witch burnt alive; for the beast was moaning on the floor, and though the Silver Man had no face, you could see horrible feelings passing through the slab that took its place, exactly as waves of heat play across red-hot iron – gun barrels for instance.
>
> Strickland shaded his eyes with his hands for a moment and we got to work. This part is not to be printed. (p.205)

Lionel Johnson describes 'The Mark of the Beast' as 'an uncanny, haunting story, told with singular power' in his review of *Life's Handicap* but is also highly critical, especially with reference to the use of elision here: 'this suggestion of unmentionable horror is a piece of the very worst possible art: [...] so pitiable a device' (quoted in Green, p.97). Of course, Johnson is not advocating that Kipling should describe the torture in physical detail, for this is his other main problem with the story – its bodily horror, suggested or otherwise:

> And he is constantly leading us up to the doors of a sealed chamber of horrors, and expecting us to be smitten with dread. The fearful and the terrible are not necessarily loathsome to the senses, matters of blood and noisome pestilence: they are produced by appeals to the imagination and to the intellect. (pp.97-98)

Johnson's door metaphor is apt given how Kipling blocks the reader's gaze and renders the scene of torture invisible, which creates an analogy between the text, with its unseeable scene, and the Hyde-like leper, with his literally absent facial features. Unlike the narrator and the spectators of an execution to whom he likens himself, the reader is saved from the sight of the horrific spectacle, its gruesome details, though one suspects that this reticence is really a matter of shielding the agents from our eyes rather than the tortured subject. Kipling countenances torture in thematic terms but he cannot bear his reader to see two Englishmen actually carry it out. Select details from their preparation suffice, from the heated barrels to 'the broken walking stick' (p.205). This last image brings Hyde's murder of Carew to mind: 'the stick with which the deed had been done [...] had broken in the middle under the stress of this insensate cruelty' (p.47). Snapped in two, the murder weapon is an emblem of Jekyll's own unruly bodily division. The point, however, lies in the contrast between the spontaneous nature of Hyde's violence and the premeditated nature of the men's brutality. They are equally disturbing in their own way. The narrator uses the broken stick to restrain the leper: 'comfortably' means that the figure is secure but it is also ironic, as if he is made 'comfortable' before being tortured. Also, notice how the narrator displaces his agency through his assumption of the role of spectator in this passage. The phrase 'we got to work' restores that agency but the euphemism 'work' detracts from the transgressive nature of the task, which it tries to normalise. The men are successful in the sense that the leper eventually agrees to remove 'the evil spirit' (p.205). The narrator's reference to witch-burning is apt because they seem to purify the leper; hence, he 'mews'

before but 'speaks' after being tortured, as with the puma in *Moreau*. Like Moreau in his operating theatre, they torture the leper into subjectivity. They make the animal human through torture but they also make him like an animal in the process; he 'crawls' towards the beast (Fleete) to lay his healing hand upon him. Of course, the fact that they torture him, the 'marks' with which they presumably brand the body, identifies them as 'the beasts'. The paradox is that they have to renounce their civilised identity in order to restore Fleete's humanity. Like many males in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic, symptomatic of the precarious state of masculine identity, the men are reduced to 'hysterics' at the end of the story (p.207). First, Strickland has 'an amazing fit' (p.207). The narrator speaks on behalf of embarrassed observers of male hysteria like Seward in *Dracula*, or Atherton in *The Beetle*, with regard to Van Helsing and Lessingham respectively, when he states, 'It is terrible to see a strong man overtaken with hysteria' (p.207). Strickland's hysteria is infectious, however, an extension of the story's pollution theme. Second, the narrator becomes 'shamefully' hysterical, as it dawns upon him 'that we had fought for Fleete's soul with the Silver Man [... ] and had disgraced ourselves as Englishmen for ever' (p.207). It is not simply the use of torture that utterly compromises their Englishness. In fact, despite the narrator's expressed doubts about helping Strickland, the issue of ethics is really secondary. As Sage argues,

> They have to deny their own Protestant rationalism and belief in providence. They have to believe in the Gods of the Other, and the reference to witchcraft clearly reveals that putting the Silver Man to the question, far from one of progress, is actually one of shameful cultural regress into superstition which had long been surpassed in English culture. (p.15)

It is less the fact that they have tortured the leper that subsequently reduces the men to hysterics than the meaning of the act. By torturing the leper they invest him with the power

to remove the curse and reverse Fleete's degeneration, and therefore undermine their own rationality in the process.

### 1.3.4 'Tacit Conspiracy between the Law and Illegal Violence': *Heart of Darkness*

In his speech delivered to the Royal Colonial Institute in 1897, Joseph Chamberlain made just the kind of justification of military force in Africa of which Wells is so critical:

> You cannot have omelettes without breaking eggs; you cannot destroy the practices of barbarism, of slavery, of superstition, which for centuries have desolated the interior of Africa, without the use of force [...]. We may rest assured that for one life lost a hundred will be gained, and the cause of civilisation and the prosperity of the people will in the long run be eminently advanced.[40]

The justification of force, the role of rhetoric in colonialism in order to distinguish (or disguise) itself from naked imperialism, is a central theme of *Heart of Darkness*. The rhetorically gifted Kurtz – 'You don't talk with that man,' the Russian tells Marlow, 'you listen to him' – has been commissioned to write a report for 'the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs'.[41] The brutality of the colonial project Marlow witnesses along his journey – the chain gang, the native shot through the head, another being beaten – is justified on the grounds of the articulated desire to bring enlightenment to the 'Congo', it being one of Kurtz's stated ideals that, 'each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for [...] humanizing, improving, instructing' (p.181). Significantly, the system described is only implicitly that of Leopold II; neither 'Africa' nor 'Congo' are named in the novella. In other words, Conrad makes the most

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[40] Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (eds), *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History C.1880-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 319.

[41] Joseph Conrad, *Heart Of Darkness and Other Tales*, ed. by Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 207 and p. 213. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

genocidal form of colonialism, one which covered itself as ostensibly a humanitarian organisation dedicated to eradicating slavery, paradigmatic of the colonial enterprise in general, ironising Marlow's (then) reassurance at the sight of 'a vast amount of red' on the Company's map when he awaits his interview (p.69).

Patrick McCarthy draws the following parallels between *Heart of Darkness* and *Moreau*:

> Kurtz aims to suppress savage customs, Moreau to suppress bestial instincts; both men are worshipped as gods, and both maintain their power through pain and fear; both stories are reported by men, who, upon their return to Europe, undergo a Gulliver-like revulsion against common humanity; and like Fresleven – a crude version of Kurtz – Moreau is eventually killed by the 'natives' in response to his own brutality.[42]

One of the key differences between the two men is that Kurtz, despite his collapse into savagery, has a grandeur which Moreau does not. In fact, a way which contrasts wholly with Wells, it is this stripping away of the veneer of civilisation that makes him in some sense an admirable figure, as we shall see. Marlow's curiosity in Kurtz has been stimulated by the fact that he has come out to the 'Congo' 'equipped with moral ideas' (p.178). However, this 'emissary of pity, and science, and progress,' embraces (or exploits) the practices of barbarism and superstition he has set out to curtail, it being symbolic that Marlow's first mental picture of him comes when he overhears how the ailing figure has turned the canoe round on his way to the Central Station (p.169). Kurtz turns his back on the colonial project 'going native': 'the awakening of forgotten and brutal instincts' embodied by the wilderness, the native 'Africans' who populate the interior (p.234).

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[42] Patrick A. McCarthy, '*Heart of Darkness* and the Early Novels of H. G. Wells: Evolution, Anarchy, Entropy', *Journal of Modern Literature* 13 (March 1986), pp. 37-60 (p. 38).

At the same time, Kurtz's atavistic regression, with its genocidal urges, bears a closer comparison with the brutality Marlow has previously witnessed. It provides a mirror image of colonial power; but one from which the veil of rhetoric has been torn, just as the philanthropy of Kurtz's beautifully written report is belied by its hellish postscript: 'Exterminate all the brutes!' (p.208). In our discussion of *The Jungle Books*, we saw how Kipling redirects the gaze from the violence that is the supplement of Law. By way of contrast Conrad forces the reader to look, even as the narrator tries to turn away; hence, at the Company Station, Marlow takes a detour in order to avoid seeing the pitiful chain-gang, only to arrive at the 'grove of death'(p.160), where the enslaved natives withdraw to die, 'some picture of a massacre or a pestilence' (p.157). What distinguishes Conrad from Wells is that Kurtz's 'honest' despotism, the lack of guile with which he deploys his power, almost becomes a commendable trait; or is at least preferable to the colonialism which masks its violent exploitation in false idealism.

Kurtz's genocidal appendage is made material in the decapitated heads Marlow spies through his binoculars, having initially misread them as ornaments. Like Prendick, he is also prone to perceptual errors, though in most respects the two narrators are dissimilar: the one priggish, 'always fearing and fancying', the other worldly and perceptive. Where Prendick is characterised by his instinctive revulsion towards the Beast Men, Marlow recognises himself in the 'African' natives on the shore:

> and the men were – No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. (p.100)

If 'yours' refers to Marlow, it is also addressed to the audience on board the *Nellie* and the subscribers of *Blackwood's* itself in which *Heart of Darkness* was originally serialised. Marlow's sense of thrill is precisely what differentiates him from Prendick. He bears closer comparison with Montgomery, who has a deep understanding both of the fundamental humanity of the Beast People and of the shamefulness of Moreau's system which he finds difficult to live with, reflected in his alcoholism and his ill treatment of M'ling, a kind of self-lacerating violence.

Marlow's error reinforces the connection between opulence and death in the narrative, just as the 'grand piano' in the Intended's apartment reminds Marlow of a 'sarcophagus' (p.246). The piano has a cluster of associations: Kurtz 'the great musician', ivory and death, though 'sarcophagus' literally translates as 'flesh-eating' (p.243). The spectre of cannibalism has been raised at the opening of the novella, in the discourse of the primary narrator on the Thames, the allusion to Sir John Franklin associating cannibalism with the white European. Marlow's steamer is crewed by cannibals, with their capacity for 'restraint' (p.195) – the key word in Marlow's code of civilised conduct, one that suggests something requires restraining – being precisely what distinguishes them from Kurtz more generally and whose own cannibalism is hinted at in the 'unspeakable rites' in which he participates. One of Marlow's first impressions of Kurtz is of a predatory and apocalyptic maw: 'I saw him open his mouth wide – it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect, as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him' (p.224). In one way, the image brings Kipling's figure of Kaa back into mind. As the symbolism of the piano suggests, 'flesh-eating' in the sense of native lives 'consumed' in the production of its ivory, colonialism itself is a form of predation or cannibalism.

Kurtz's relationship to the wilderness is described by Marlow as a kind of symbiotic cannibalism, a demonic communion in which he gratifies his various lusts, while his body is eaten away by disease, the association between ivory and death encapsulated in his skeletal features. In an echo of the descriptions of Frankenstein's creature and Moreau, Marlow's first view of Kurtz describes a fractured and spectral figure: 'through my glasses,' recalls Marlow, 'I saw the thin arm extended commandingly, the lower jaw moving, the eyes of that apparition shining darkly far in its bony head that nodded with grotesque jerks' (pp.223-24). Given Marlow's eagerness to confront Kurtz – having fled from the enclosure in fear of his life, Prendick expresses the contradictory desire 'to encounter Moreau face to face' (p.52) – this wasted spectacle makes for a bathetic sight. The fragments depict in physical terms his shattered psyche but are in keeping with the sense elsewhere of Kurtz's constructedness or monstrous conception: 'All Europe contributed to the making of Kurtz', Marlow adds by way of comment on his parentage (p.207).

Choosing between two 'nightmares', Marlow turns to the genocidal Kurtz for relief from the moral bankruptcy of the civilising mission (p.228). He carefully justifies his ensuing loyalty in terms of the self-knowledge Kurtz seems to acquire at the moment of death, articulated in his words 'The horror! The horror!', which Marlow first interprets as 'a judgement upon the adventures of his soul [...]. It was an affirmation, a moral victory' (p.239, pp.240-41). His redemptive reading paves the way for the 'rehabilitation' of Kurtz in death, his reconstruction as 'an emissary of light', Marlow tearing off the postscript before handing it to the Company representative (p.149). On the one hand, Marlow's sense of redemption is but a further reflection of his own humaneness, previously shown in the

grove of death when he hands out a biscuit and which he will repeat in his lie to the Intended. On the other hand, his preservation of the illusion of Kurtz the great man, is in utter contradiction of the value he sees in him, as Marlow knows only too well (his sense of having betrayed Kurtz). Marlow's understanding of the necessity of 'saving illusion' offers itself as a parallel to the lying idealism of the colonial project; indeed, the torn postscript and his lie to the Intended seal that version of history in (p.249). Appropriately enough, the dark savagery of colonialism is revealed through Marlow's compassionate deceitfulness, the humanitarian rhetoric in which colonialism is cloaked being the biggest lie of all.

Both Marlow and Prendick return at some point to the heart of the empire, to London. 'When I lived in London', writes Prendick, 'the horror was wellnigh insupportable' (p.128). As Marlow begins to recount his tale aboard the *Nellie*, 'The air was dark above Gravesend, and farther back still seemed condensed into a mournful gloom, brooding motionless over the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth' (p.135). The 'horror' and 'dark', which feature prominently in their stories of man's flawed and cruel exploits, are features they cannot evade back in London, the depiction of which in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic will be considered in Chapter Four. In the following chapter, I return to my interest in the perceptual drama that characterises looking, this time with reference to *Jekyll and Hyde*, before going on to consider the disastrous consequences of Jekyll's attempt to remove 'the stubborn beast flesh'.

# Chapter 2

## The Gaze, Subjectivity and Bodily Identity: *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

### Introduction

In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the importance of the role of the observer is reflected in the composition of the text, which largely consists of a series of eye-witness accounts of Hyde, or a quasi-legal sequence of testimonies, which culminates with the first person narratives of Lanyon and Jekyll himself. Gordon Hirsch makes the point that, 'Reading goes on everywhere in the book [...] as a fundamental activity of life. [...] Signatures, wills, letters, texts – or, for that matter, faces, houses, footsteps, and voices – ask to be read and invite interpretation, but they may equivocate'.[1] As in the previous chapter, my discussion will begin with the perceptual drama that characterises looking in the novel, as observers like Enfield and Utterson struggle to get to grips with the sight of the monstrous Hyde, not least because of the challenge he poses to representation. Hyde produces a reaction of disgust in the viewer and arouses their curiosity at the same time. This curiosity is to be considered in the context of the Gothic more generally, with William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) of particular interest in relation to Caleb's spying on Falkland and his subsequent entrapment in Falkland's omniscient gaze. The section concludes with a discussion of Utterson, whose interest in Hyde unwittingly confounds his intention to protect Jekyll. The remainder of the chapter concerns the issue of subjectivity and bodily identity in relation to Jekyll-Hyde. First, I look at the repressive nature of the

[1] Gordon Hirsch, '*Frankenstein*, Detective Fiction, and *Jekyll and Hyde*', in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years*, ed. by William Veeder and Gordon Hirsch (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 237-239.

bachelor community and how this results in the creation, or the release, of Hyde. Jekyll likens the body to a suit of clothes which he believes he can take off and put on at will. This is a misapprehension, of course. The text throws up a number of different models of subjectivity but I suggest that Hyde is the biological entity underlying the conscious subject, before concluding with some thoughts about the cultural context of the novel.

### 2.1 The Gaze

While enjoying one of their weekly rambles, Enfield tells Utterson how he has seized Hyde after he has knocked down a little girl and 'trampled calmly over the child's body' (p.33). Hyde gives him such a hideous look that he induces a kind of fever in the onlooker: 'he was perfectly cool and made no resistance, but gave me one look, so ugly that it brought out the sweat on me like running' (p.33). Hyde's gaze has a dynamic quality, functioning as a substitute for a physical blow. In fact, the sight of Hyde almost triggers a kind of reversion to the animal or the savage in the doctor who also attends the scene. 'I had taken a loathing to my gentleman at first sight,' recalls Enfield, 'But the doctor's case was what struck me. [...] Every time he looked at my prisoner, I saw that Sawbones turn sick and white with desire to kill him' (p.33). Peter Garrett makes the point that, 'The opposition between Hyde and others repeatedly begins to blur as soon as it posited. [...] Those who confront and oppose Hyde seem to turn into his doubles'.[2] The sight of the recently feasted Dracula at rest in his box prompts a similarly murderous anger in Harker. It is important to stress the visual dynamic at work here. It is in the act of gazing that the male

[2] Peter K. Garrett, 'Cries and Voices: Reading *Jekyll and Hyde*', in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years* (see Hirsch, above), pp. 59-72 (p. 68). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

subject becomes the mirror of the monster, although he does not, or will not, recognise himself as such: in Jekyll's words, acknowledge that 'This, too, was myself' (p.79).

In the discussion of *Moreau*, Prendick's struggle to describe the Beast Men was considered. Hurley notes with reference to this difficulty that on occasions, 'he sees very clearly, but has no language to describe the objects of his gaze. All he can specify are his own symptomatic responses to the strangeness of the islanders' (p.104). This echoes the difficulty the observer has in delineating Hyde. According to Enfield:

> 'He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something down-right detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory, for I declare I can see him this moment.' (pp.35-36)

Like the Beast Men, Hyde exudes a strong sense of physical abnormality, subsequently explained by Jekyll in terms of his being 'pure evil', which prompts an overwhelming sense of revulsion in the onlooker (p.79). According to Jenni Calder, 'One of the striking effects of the story's tone is the juxtaposition of [the] cool, rather arid characters, isolated and emotionally uncommitted, with the extreme horror and disgust which Hyde and all that is associated with him engenders'.[3] However, the precise source of disgust is difficult to pin down. Hyde escapes the economy of the gaze, being somehow beyond representation. Prendick can at least describe the deformity of the Beast Man, even if he cannot categorise it to begin with, whereas Enfield is unable to find any distinguishing sign, contrary to his powerful impression of disgust.

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[3] 'Introduction', in Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Stories*, ed. by Jenni Calder (London: Penguin, 1979), pp. 7-23 (p. 12).

Hyde embodies the notion of the allure of the disgusting. When Hyde comes to collect the drug Lanyon has fetched for him from Jekyll's cabinet, the doctor notes how Hyde, 'from the first moment of his entrance, struck in me what I can only describe as a disgustful curiosity', an oft-repeated word in Lanyon's narrative (p.72). As William Veeder points out, 'Hyde is a threat only to the extent that Lanyon cannot resist his own curiosity'.[4] Rather than allow Hyde to slip away into the night, he succumbs to 'the greed of curiosity' and seeks an explanation for his service (p.74). Hyde's subsequent demonstration of the reversibility of identity proves a deadly spectacle for Lanyon, as he witnesses the overturning of his scientific worldview, as well as the collapse of the distinctions upon which his own sense of self is based. Curiosity is a common character trait of the Gothic hero, one which results in transgression. 'The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine,' recalls Frankenstein (p.21). His scientific curiosity culminates in the construction of the creature and all the violation of ethics and laws that the process involves. His desire to explore the natural world is mirrored in Walton's desire to explore the geographical world: 'I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited', he writes in his opening letter, and he is subsequently chastised for his 'senseless curiosity', when he asks Frankenstein to impart his secret knowledge (p.6, p.178). Walton ultimately resists the urge to satisfy his curiosity; he terminates the voyage in order to return the crew home safely. The moral Frankenstein extrapolates from the devastation of his own family and friends attests to the destructive potential of curiosity: 'A human being in perfection ought always to preserve a calm and peaceful mind, and never to allow

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[4] William Veeder, 'Children of the Night: Stevenson and Patriarchy', in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde After One Hundred Years* (see Hirsch, above), p. 152. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

passion or a transitory desire to disturb [...] the tranquillity of his domestic affections' (p.37).

The thematic treatment of curiosity in *Caleb Williams* is more relevant to *Jekyll and Hyde*, to the extent that the novel is concerned with uncovering the secret of an individual and its consequences. As we saw in the discussion of Wells, Moreau likens his laboratory to Bluebeard's chamber. 'I rather amused myself with tracing a certain similitude between the story of Caleb Williams and the tale of Bluebeard', writes William Godwin in his account of the composition of *Caleb Williams*, before continuing:

> Falkland was my Bluebeard, who had perpetrated atrocious crimes, which if discovered, he might expect to have all the world roused to revenge against him. Caleb Williams was the wife, who in spite of warning, persisted in his attempts to discover the forbidden secret; and, when he had succeeded, struggled as fruitlessly to escape the consequences, as the wife of Bluebeard in washing the key of the ensanguined chamber, who, as often as she cleared the stain of blood from the one side, found it showing itself with frightful distantness on the other.[5]

Caleb has become secretary to the local squire, Falkland. 'The spring of action, which perhaps more than any other, characterised the whole train of my life, was curiosity', records Caleb; 'curiosity' subsequently described as 'a kind of fatal impulse that seemed destined to hurry me to destruction' (p.4, p.121). Falkland's past becomes the object of his curiosity. Caleb comes to suspect his master of murder and resolves to uncover his guilty secret, partly by spying upon him, an activity from which he derives 'a strange sort of pleasure [...]. To do what is forbidden always has its charms' (p.107). This pleasure is also intensified by the inherent danger of his chosen occupation. Masao Miyoshi notes that, 'At heart Caleb is less a wholesome country boy than a voyeur with a touch of the morbid

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[5] William Godwin, *Caleb Williams* (1794), ed. by David McCracken (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 340-1. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

about him. [...] This spiritual Peeping Tom remains quite blind to the depravity of his project'.[6] Caleb takes a voyeuristic pleasure in spying upon Falkland, though his curiosity is also motivated by detection. Voyeurism depends upon the separation between the voyeur and the watched. On one occasion, he intentionally collapses that separation. Caleb comes across a letter addressed to Falkland. 'At another time perhaps my curiosity might have given way to the laws of decorum', he writes (p.114). Caleb succumbs and reads the letter, deviously putting it back in such a way that Falkland will not only find it, but suspect Caleb of having read it, the intention being to force his master into a disclosure. This deliberate compromise of the secrecy of his voyeurism fails to produce the desired effect but when Falkland subsequently catches Caleb breaking into his trunk, he confesses; only not before he has sworn him to secrecy: 'It was better to trust you with the whole truth under every seal of secrecy', he tells Caleb, 'than to live in perpetual fear of your penetration or rashness' (p.136).

Lanyon's observation of the transformation of Hyde into Jekyll is conducted under similar restrictions to Falkland's confidential confession. 'Lanyon, you remember your vows,' Hyde tells him, 'what follows is under the seal of our profession' (p.74). Thus, the dying Lanyon rebuffs Utterson's subsequent enquiry and forbids his narrative which details the transformation to be read until the death or disappearance of Jekyll. In contrast to Caleb, Utterson's curiosity does give way to the laws of decorum when it comes to the document Lanyon has entrusted to him:

> A great curiosity came on the trustee, to disregard the prohibition and dive at once to the bottom of these mysteries; but professional honour and faith to his

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[6] Masao Miyoshi, *The Divided Self: A Perspective on the Literature of the Victorians* (London: University of London Press, 1969), p. 25.

> dead friend were stringent obligations; and the packet slept in the inmost corner of his private safe. (p.56)

Utterson is pulled between not wanting to open the outer enclosure when it is permitted or required of him, and wanting to open the inner enclosure when it is forbidden. If on one level Hyde exploits the restrictions of professional confidentiality to preserve the secret of dual identity and all that goes with it, on another level, Stevenson exploits these restrictions in order to sequence the narrative. The note left in the cabinet ensures that Utterson goes back and reads Lanyon's narrative before opening Jekyll's statement. Seed points out that *Jekyll and Hyde* is based on the principle of delay (p.9). Confidentiality is just one of Stevenson's strategies for delay, the most obvious being the physical difference between Jekyll and Hyde, parodied by Punch magazine. When 'Stutterson' requests to see his face, 'Hidanseek' consents. 'Why not?' he says, 'Don't you recognise me?' To which the lawyer responds: 'Mr. R. L. Stevenson says I mustn't [...] for, if I did, I should spoil the last chapter' (quoted in Stevenson, p.144). The delay acts as a counter current to the curiosity that propels the text, simultaneously pulling it back, as is the case when Jekyll wards Utterson off the topic of Hyde early on. 'This is a matter I thought we had agreed to drop,' he tells the lawyer, 'this is a private matter, and I beg of you to let it sleep' (p.44). He does something similar in his letter to Utterson following Lanyon's death. Once again having disappeared from public view, he pleads with the lawyer 'to respect my silence' (p.56). As Enfield's story of the door and the subsequent examples of Utterson attempting to suppress the flow of information also show, concealment and disclosure are not only thematised at the level of action, but are as much about a question of the verbal and written transactions between the characters. The delay is obviously necessary to pace the novel but it also

suggests a kind of reluctance to admit to the fact of 'opposites coexisting in one person, extremes of social decorum and its opposite' (Seed, p.9).

Concealment for Falkland has less to do with the content of the secret, than with the extent to which he values his reputation, 'the idol, the jewel of my life', which would be destroyed were the secret publicly disclosed (p.102). To that extent, he anticipates Jekyll, who initially conceals his pleasures because of the wish to be highly regarded in society. In fact, Jekyll is just the sort of hypocrite identified by Dorian Gray, when Basil Hallward confronts him with the rumours circulating about his private life: 'And what sort of lives do these people [the middle classes], who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite' (pp.144-5).[7] Falkland's confidential disclosure results less in the satisfaction of Caleb's curiosity than the reversal of their roles. Now it is Caleb who is burdened by a secret he cannot share and who is closely monitored:

> I was his prisoner: and what a prisoner! All my actions observed; all my gestures marked. I could move neither to the right nor the left, but the eye of my keeper was upon me. He watched me; and his vigilance was a sickness to my heart. (p.143)

Godwin secularises the omniscient eye of God in the form of Falkland; Caleb is imprisoned by his all-seeing gaze. Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon allows each prisoner to be observed without their being able to verify whether they are being observed or not by the guard. According to Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), the point about the Panopticon is not that this style of building allows for an efficient form of surveillance in which a guard is always actively looking but that the building itself, with its regulatory form, affects

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[7] In a letter to John Paul Bocock, Stevenson writes, 'The harm was in Jekyll, because he was a hypocrite [...]. The hypocrite let out the beast in Hyde' (quoted in Paul Maixner (ed.), *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 231).

behaviour. The prisoner pre-empts any potential observation by a guard and internalises an 'inspecting gaze' and thus supervises his own behaviour:

> There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under his weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself. (*Power/Knowledge* p.155)

Botting makes the point Caleb is not only 'subjected to external forms of discipline and surveillance in the shape of Falkland' but that 'surveillance is also internalised [for] he has made himself a prisoner of guilt as well as the caprices of his master' (p.95). Nonetheless, Caleb attempts to escape from Falkland's omniscient gaze by fleeing to London, 'an inexhaustible reservoir of concealment to the majority of mankind' (p.254). He purchases a new set of clothes and darkens his complexion in order to disguise himself and remains confined in his lodgings until dark. Having sought refuge in London, its inhabitants are a constant source of paranoia. 'In every human countenance', he writes, 'I feared to find the countenance of an enemy. I shrunk from the vigilance of every human eye. [...] I was shut up a deserted, solitary wreck in the midst of my species' (p.255). Falkland sends the thief and bounty-hunter Gines, who also has a personal vendetta against Caleb, in pursuit. At first, he can find no sign of him in the big city. Gines eventually captures Caleb by turning the crowd to his advantage. He sells halfpenny pamphlets which not only detail and embellish Caleb's history – his criminal past, use of disguise and present concealment in London – but also offer a reward for his capture. Caleb's latest disguise as a hunchback is made redundant. 'A numerous class of individuals [...] would be induced to look with a suspicious eye upon every stranger', reflects Caleb after this latest exposure. Gines unleashes 'the gaze of indiscriminate curiosity' and Caleb is caught in its web when his newfound patrician turns him over (p.270).

William Patrick Day points to the recurrence of voyeurism in the Gothic:

> Caleb Williams spies on Falkland, who spies on Williams; [...] Frankenstein's creature looks at the De Lacys through a crack in the wall; [...] and both Henry Jekyll and Dorian Gray are fascinated observers of their own desires and experiences.[8]

Enfield loiters outside the door of the laboratory in order to spy on Hyde after their initial encounter. Hyde arouses his curiosity by disappearing inside the door, only to reappear with a cheque for the child's family made out in another's name. Enfield's intention is to satisfy his curiosity regarding this apparent blackmailer without engendering scandal; hence, he places the door under surveillance rather than make enquiries. His caution against precipitating scandal is undermined to the extent that his conversation with Utterson heightens the lawyer's already considerable interest in Hyde. Jekyll has rewritten his will and left everything to Hyde before handing it back to Utterson. Enfield's revelation of Hyde's disreputable character triggers the investigation that culminates in the assault on the cabinet door by Utterson and Poole, Jekyll's faithful servant. Utterson's interest in Hyde is essentially at odds with his role to protect Jekyll. Legal justice is less important to the lawyer than his commitment to his social circle; specifically, the preservation of the good name of its members and the prevention of scandal. 'Make a clean breast of this in confidence,' he tells Jekyll with reference to Hyde's apparent blackmail of him, 'and I make no doubt I can get you out of it' (p.45). Following the murder of Carew, Utterson leads the inspector to Hyde's Soho address but remains tight-lipped, contrary to the allegorical suggestiveness of his name, careful not to expose Jekyll. Utterson's concern is not that Hyde is brought to justice but as he tells Jekyll, 'If it came to a trial, your name

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[8] William Patrick Day, *In the Circles of Fire and Desire* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 63-64. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

might appear'; indeed, he thinks that Hyde's subsequent disappearance is adequate compensation for Carew's death, especially as it is accompanied by Jekyll's reappearance in public (p.51). As Linda Dryden notes, it is one of the ironies of the novel therefore, 'that the two men who were the most active in trying to protect Jekyll are in fact, by breaking into his sanctuary, the agents of his exposure'.[9]

Utterson also loiters outside the laboratory after his conversation with Enfield, but his intention is less to spy on Hyde than to confront him, in order to satisfy his desire to scrutinise the hateful face that his friend has been unable to describe and that has subsequently eluded him in his own dreams. For Utterson obsessively and voyeuristically replays Enfield's story in his mind when he goes to bed:

> as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room, Mr. Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures. He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city, then of the figure of a man walking swiftly; then of a child running from the doctor's; and then these met, and that human Juggernaut trod the child down and passed on regardless of her screams. (p.39)

In *Caligari's Children* (1980), Siegbert Prawer points out that 'Utterson's own imagination [...] is presented in a way that makes it (for us) recognizably cinematic'.[10] This is a particularly noteworthy observation in light of our interest in the strong visual element of the Gothic, the re-emergence of which towards the end of the nineteenth century was contextualised in my introduction in terms of visual modernity, including the birth of cinema. *Jekyll and Hyde* seems to tap into, or is partly the product of, similar undercurrents to those that result in the emergence of cinematography.

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[9] Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2003), p. 108. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[10] Siegbert S. Prawer, *Caligari's Children: The Film as Tale of Terror* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1980), p. 90. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

In addition to his cinematic mind, Utterson has also been identified with a kind of photographic gaze. The image of Hyde remains faceless on the screen of his imagination:

> even in his dreams, it had no face, or one that baffled him and melted before his eyes; and thus it was that there sprang up and grew apace in the lawyer's mind a singularly strong, almost an inordinate curiosity to behold the features of the real Mr. Hyde. If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought that the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll away altogether, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined. (p.39)

The image of the melting face is closer to the truth of Hyde's metamorphic identity than Utterson could possibly know. Robert Mighall notes that 'Utterson's reliance upon the specular is conspicuous' and continues,

> the fact that Utterson believes that seeing Hyde's face will reveal the truth suggests that the lawyer has some physiognomic system of criminal classification in mind. He appears to want to add either a photograph or mental 'snap shot' [...] to his taxonomical gallery of criminal types.[11]

This idea of the photographic gaze is actually articulated in Marsh's *The Beetle*. At one point, the eponymous villain visits the scientist Sydney Atherton in his laboratory and changes from a man into an insect before his very eyes. 'I kept my glance riveted on the creature, with the idea of photographing it on my brain' recalls Atherton, 'I believe that if it were possible to take a retinal print – which it some day will be – you would have a perfect picture of what I saw'.[12] In the event, Atherton loses his composure as the insect changes into a sexually attractive young woman. His detachment collapses to his regret: 'if I had only retained the normal attitude of a scientific observer' (p.154). Utterson is also rather unsuccessful in his scrutiny of Hyde. The lawyer introduces himself when he finally appears, both to get a good look at his face and to make him aware of the fact that he is

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[11] Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 188 and p. 190. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[12] Richard Marsh, *The Beetle* (1897), ed. by Julian Wolfreys (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2004), p. 151. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

being watched. Hyde acquiesces to the request to show his face and the two men exchange gazes. 'Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish [...], he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness', and the onlooker reacts with 'disgust, loathing and fear' (p.41). As critics have tended to note, the references to Hyde as 'dwarfish', 'apelike' and 'like a monkey' in the novel identify him in terms of the animal, or the primitive, within the human (p.41, p.46, p.64). In the previous chapter, Hyde was mentioned with reference to 'criminal man'. According to Lombroso, the beast within the degenerate subject is biologically determined to irrupt, manifesting itself in terms of violent criminality. This is the model we shall apply to Jekyll-Hyde in the subsequent discussion of subjectivity. Catherine Spooner reminds us that, 'One of the major themes of degenerationist discourse was the identification of the criminal 'type' through physical appearance'.[13] Significantly, Utterson finds it impossible to describe Hyde accurately like Enfield:

> 'There is something more, if I could find a name for it. God bless me, the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic, shall we say? [...] or is it the mere radiance of a foul soul that thus transpires through, and transfigures, its clay continent? The last, I think [...], if ever I read Satan's signature upon a face, it is on that of your friend.' (pp.41-42)

Utterson's ineffectual conclusion is only accurate to the extent that it anticipates Jekyll's condemnation of Hyde as 'That child of Hell'; condemnation that is less indicative of Hyde's demonic status, than the extent of Jekyll's self-alienation (p.88). It also sits uneasily with Enfield's actorly sense of the satanic Hyde amidst the female mob: 'here was the man in the middle, with a kind of black sneering coolness – frightened too, I could see that – but carrying it off, sir, really like Satan' (p.34). Having steamrollered over the child, he now

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[13] Catherine Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 101.

plays the role of the unhurried aristocrat. The point is that there is a tension between Hyde's correspondence with a degenerationist argument (the biological determinism of the novel) and the fact that he escapes the economy of the gaze. In her discussion of the nineteenth-century drive towards specularity, Flint makes the point that 'the uncouth Hyde, even if bearing signs of degeneration, genetic reversion and stuntedness, is more remarkable for the intangible and revulsion-provoking aura which he emanates than for any identifiable physical marks of evil' (p.18). It is highly relevant that Flint should find a literary example of resistance to this drive in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. We can reiterate a point made in the introduction, that the Gothic makes manifest the anxieties of a culture in which specularity is becoming the cultural dominant; hence, Hyde resists Utterson's conspicuous specularity. Alan Sandison also reminds us that on one level 'the face he is searching for – and failing to recognise – is his own'.[14] In *Moreau*, there is a moment of unaccountable recognition, when Prendick first catches sight of M'ling's face on board the *Ipecacuanha*. He reasons that he must have seen him when first brought aboard, 'yet that scarcely satisfied my suspicion of a previous acquaintance. Yet how one could have set eyes on so singular a face and have forgotten the precise occasion passed my imagination' (p.14). One possible explanation is that M'ling's face is familiar because it reminds him of his own. The disgust of observers like Prendick in *Moreau*, or Enfield and Utterson in *Jekyll and Hyde* is an unconscious self-disgust on one level. Prendick's inability to identify the animal sign or the men's inability to describe Hyde is a refusal to recognise the reflection of their own animality, which contrasts with Jekyll's welcome recognition of Hyde, as we shall now consider.

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[14] Alan Sandison, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1996), p. 242. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

## 2.2 Subjectivity and Bodily Identity

### 2.2.1. The Repressive Bachelor Community and the Release of Hyde

Male identity in the novella takes the form of a sombre self-fashioning, driven by an acute awareness of the public gaze. The community of middle-aged bachelors adhere to a strict code of respectability, an extreme social decorum that is reflected in Jekyll's 'imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public' (p.76). In the case of Utterson, the concern for his public reputation seems to demand the total exclusion of pleasure: 'he was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years' (p.31). Described as 'cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary', Utterson himself has a certain Gothic presence (p.31). As Andrew Smith notes, 'Although Hyde appears to be the central Gothic character, there is also the suggestion that it is the middle-class professionals who lead empty, dislocated and alienated Gothic lives'.[15] Without wives or families, they seem to be living at the fag-end of a certain kind of existence, tying the novella in with contemporary fears of individual and social decline.

The alternative to this exclusion of pleasure is its pursuit or fulfilment in secret, the cultivation of a hidden identity. Prior to Hyde, Jekyll leads a double existence, concealing his pleasures not on account of their excessive nature but because of the code of propriety he so strictly adheres to, incompatible as it is with visible pleasure-seeking. The creation of Hyde merely marks an extension or consolidation of the divided life-style Jekyll has been

[15] Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin-De-Siècle* (Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 179. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

leading up to that point. The prohibition on pleasure or desire then splits Jekyll into public and private selves, the maintenance of the former depending upon its clear separation from the latter. What Jekyll fears, particularly as he grows older and more respectable, is the exposure of his private self; that his hidden identity will be exposed and the public self destroyed in the ensuing scandal. This in turn makes him vulnerable to blackmail. The more strictly he adheres to the code of respectability, the more vulnerable he becomes. Utterson mistakenly believes that Jekyll is being blackmailed by Hyde. According to Utterson, 'he was wild when he was young' and the lawyer rationalises the appearance of Hyde and the perceived power this unsavoury character has over Jekyll, in terms of 'the ghost of some old sin', a youthful transgression for which Jekyll is now being made to pay (p.43). This is ironic because Jekyll creates Hyde in order to shield himself from scandal but the opposite happens.

Committed to a double life with its attendant dangers and drawbacks, Jekyll longs for a solution. Jekyll attributes his divided existence to an internal division between his moral and immoral selves. Thus, the solution lies in the separation of his mixed nature:

> If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil. (p.77)

The description of the moral self as 'more upright' is suggestive, meaning more civilised or decent but also implying more human, as in standing 'upright'. As Hendershot notes, 'Jekyll's experiment relies on Darwin's theories for its basic premise (i.e. that there is a genetic link between animal and human)', though it is also described in theological terms

(p.105). Jekyll develops a drug which effects a chemical release of the animal or the savage from the 'fortress of identity' that is the moral self, as 'the doors of the prisonhouse' are opened (p.78, p.80). The flesh exhibits in the process, to coin Moreau's terms, an extreme plasticity. At the same time, this separation is not as originally intended. The drug separates or distils his immoral self and when Hyde takes the drug, Jekyll is returned to his internally divided or composite self. This is significant because it undermines a reading of Jekyll and Hyde as polar opposites. In fact, Hyde reveals himself to be more composite than Jekyll suggests. For example, Hyde is also concerned with his reputation; in such a way as to compromise Jekyll's incognito.

When Jekyll takes the drug for the first time, he experiences a tortuous physical transformation, followed by a profound shift in consciousness. Noticing that he has shrunk, he steals from the laboratory into his bedroom in order to view his new body in the mirror. It is misshapen and diseased,

> And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine. (p.79)

Jekyll's scrutiny of his two faces anticipates the way Dorian Gray compares his mirror image with the portrait. His 'leap of welcome' is in vivid contrast both to Frankenstein's disgusted rejection of his creation and the creature's own despondent recognition of himself in a pool of water:

> At first I started back, unable to believe that it was indeed I who was reflected in the mirror; and when I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am, I was filled with the bitterest sensations of despondency and mortification. (p.90)

Whereas the creature interprets his ugliness as a sign of monstrosity (a reading belied by his eloquence), the 'ugly' Hyde appears 'natural and human' to Jekyll.[16] 'More express and single', Hyde seems more complete than the hybrid creature or Moreau's Beast Man, who thus bare closer resemblance to the internally divided Jekyll. And Hyde is not only more complete. Despite his misshapen and diseased appearance, his degenerate body is paradoxically more vital or virile too (hence, 'a livelier image of spirit').

Jekyll's description of seeing his new self seems to prefigure Lacan's account of the 'mirror stage' of childhood development, in which the infant responds to its reflected image 'with a flutter of jubilant activity', that image having a coherence which the infant lacks, just as Hyde seems to be more complete.[17] Or rather the description is like a reverse mirror stage. As Jackson has observed, texts like *Jekyll and Hyde*,

> fantasise a return to a state of undifferentiation, to a condition *preceding* the mirror stage and its creation of dualism. For prior to this construction, in a state of primary narcissism, the child is its own ideal, and experiences no discrepancy between self (as perceiving subject) and other (as perceived subject). To get back, onto the far side of the mirror, becomes a powerful metaphor for returning to an originary unity, a 'paradise' lost by the 'fall' into division with the construction of the subject. (p.89)

Images of undifferentiation are to be found in the novella – Jekyll's residence provides one example: as Enfield says of the apparent jumble of buildings, 'it's hard to say to where one ends and another begins' (p.35). The London fog with which Hyde is associated provides another. Hyde himself is described in infantile terms. When Jekyll takes the drug, he shrinks – the impression of Hyde's child-like stature exacerbated by the fact that he is

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[16] My discussion of the image of Hyde builds on observations made by Botting, p. 141.
[17] Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage', in *Contemporary Film Theory* (see Mulvey, above), pp. 33-39 (p. 34).

swamped in Jekyll's clothes.[18] Hyde is also self-centred, prone to outbursts of rage and tramples his victims underfoot. He also takes childish delight in scribbling profanities in Jekyll's pious works, which perhaps counters the notion that Hyde is actually in control of the narrative in parts. Jekyll's relationship with Hyde is even described at one point in parental terms.

We can interpret Hyde's wholeness then as a kind of return to an originary unity. Significantly, Hyde is also racially coded, his skin being described in terms of a 'dusky pallor' (p.82). While Hyde is usually understood in terms of evolutionary theories, we can also detect an element of the 'Noble Savage' myth, as is possible in some of Marlow's descriptions of the natives in *Heart of Darkness*.[19] Watching the natives dancing on the shore, Marlow experiences a similar thrill to Jekyll when he sees Hyde for the first time. Jekyll's jubilant recognition of the more complete image of Hyde suggests on one level a nostalgia for a lost childhood (Jekyll actually likens the transformation into Hyde to the 'schoolboy' who 'strips off' adult constraint), on another level, it suggests a nostalgia for a metaphorical lost childhood and the untroubled agency of pre-civilised 'natural man'. The paradox is that the wholeness of Hyde is only possible because of the splitting or doubling of Jekyll, as the image of the mirror reminds us (Day, p.90).

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[18] See Veeder, p. 126.

[19] For a discussion of Marlow's perception of the African subject as noble savage, see Hendershot pp. 153-156.

### 2.2.2. The Body as Clothes

In the process of the transformation, Jekyll puts on the flesh of Hyde to satisfy desire. What the action of the drug shows, so Jekyll believes, is that the body is like a set of clothes:

> I began to perceive more deeply than it has ever yet been stated, the trembling immateriality, the mistlike transience, of this seemingly so solid body in which we walk attired. Certain agents I found to have the power to shake and pluck back that fleshly vestment, even as a wind might toss the curtains of a pavilion. (p.77)

This is one of a number of important metaphors used to describe the body in the novella. Others include the metaphor of the body as house (Jekyll dreams of 'housing' his divided self in separate bodies) and the metaphor of the body as city: 'Jekyll was now my city of refuge' writes Jekyll of the situation following the murder of Carew (p.86). Both these metaphors work the other way round in the novella: the house and the city are like bodies to the extent that Jekyll's house, divided between a respectable front and a disreputable back, is emblematic of his two selves, as shall be considered more closely in chapter four. It is the metaphor of the 'body as clothes' that is of interest here. Revelling in the new-found power provided by the drug, Jekyll boasts, 'I had but to drink the cup, to doff at once the body of the noted professor, and to assume, like a thick cloak, that of Edward Hyde' (p.80). Jekyll swaps one suit of flesh for another. As the metaphor suggests, subjectivity has become a 'doing' rather a 'being', an action rather than an essence, a performance. In retrospect, bodily identity is but a matter of habit and familiarity; hence, Jekyll's description of 'the imperfect and divided countenance I had been hitherto accustomed to call mine' (p.79). Adapting Judith Butler's characterisation of gender as straightforward theatre in *Gender Trouble* (1990), the suggestion is that Jekyll is like an actor who performs his identity: he

plays the role of Hyde in order to satisfy the desire that is otherwise prohibited by the code of respectability. Hyde is Jekyll's 'impenetrable mantle': in effect, Jeykll becomes the invisible man – 'Men have hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person sat under shelter. I was the first person that ever did so for his pleasures. [...] I did not even exist!' – words which come back to haunt him when it becomes apparent that Hyde is taking possession of the body and that he is dissolving (p.81). In the meantime, Hyde is, as Day suggests, 'the alternate identity through whom Jekyll can indulge his pursuit of pleasure as voyeur, for he is fully conscious of everything Hyde does' (p.90). 'When I would come back from these excursions', recalls Jekyll in a way which anticipates Dorian Gray's fascination with his picture, 'I was often plunged into a kind of wonder at my vicarious depravity' (p.81). Hyde allows Jekyll to fulfil desire and to deny responsibility for his actions simultaneously. 'It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone that was guilty': and safe from recrimination, Jekyll's pleasures become increasingly transgressive (p.81).

Jekyll does not say what his pleasures consist of, initially describing them as 'irregularities' and that they develop from the 'undignified' into the 'monstrous'. As is the case with Montgomery, it is left to the reader to infer that they may be of a sexual nature; that Hyde is the embodiment of desire or Jekyll's sexuality. 'Into the details of the infamy at which I thus connived', writes Jekyll, in keeping with the code of respectability, one that regarded sex as an unspeakable subject, 'I have no design of entering' (p.81). Lanyon is similarly reticent. 'What he told me in the next hour', writes the doctor of the conversation that follows the deadly spectacle of Hyde's transformation into Jekyll, 'I cannot bring my mind to set on paper' (p.75). Utterson's misapprehension that Jekyll is being blackmailed is especially suggestive of homosexuality. *Jekyll and Hyde* was published five months after

Labouchere's amendment was passed in parliament in August 1885, which criminalized the pursuit of male same sex desire in public and in private and was in effect a blackmailer's charter.[20] In our discussion of *Moreau*, we saw how Prendick's misapprehensions open up the textual space for alternative readings of the novel, for example, how his misperception that the Beast People are racially other facilitates a colonial reading. Utterson's misapprehensions – another example is the belief that Hyde has dictated the terms of Jekyll's will and plans to murder him – do not have the same generative power as those of Prendick, which produce the extensive layering of *Moreau*, but his resolve to find 'a reason for his friend's strange preference or bondage' opens up the textual space for a queer reading of the novel, in terms of Jekyll's relationship with Hyde 'strange preference' hinting at a sexual liaison) (p.39).[21] It is the twin fears of the destruction of one's reputation and of blackmail that regulates the behaviour of the bachelors more generally, not only resulting in the self-repressed emptiness of their lives but also their curiosity in Hyde. Utterson's misunderstanding of Jekyll's predicament leads him to examine his own past and though it is 'fairly blameless', he is 'humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done and raised up again into a sober and fearful gratitude by the many that he had come so near to doing, yet avoided' (p.43). Even Utterson it would seem has been guilty of a certain impropriety. Indeed, undercurrents of sexual scandal plague the community. As Guy Davidson notes, Utterson's cousin Enfield, 'first encounters Hyde "coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning", associating him with Hyde's own nocturnal activities, which are unspecified but marked as

[20] See Richard Davenport-Hines, *Sex, Death and Punishment: Attitudes to Sex and Sexuality in Britain Since the Renaissance* (London: Collins, 1990), p. 131. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[21] For a queer reading of the novel see Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2003), Donald E. Hall, *Queer Theories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2003), and Showalter (1990).

nefarious', while; 'Homosexual scandal is suggested in the circumstances of Hyde's murder of an MP, Sir Danvers Carew'.[22]

There are three points to be made about Jekyll's idea of subjectivity as a performance. The first is that when Jekyll plays the role of Hyde, it is only a more material version of what some of the bachelors do anyway. In Utterson's capacity as lawyer for example,

> it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of downgoing men. And to such as these, so long as they came about his chambers, he never marked a shade of change in his demeanour. (p.31)

Utterson participates vicariously in his clients' misdeeds, as Hyde provides Jekyll with vicarious pleasure. This also suggests that his concern for Jekyll, who has altered his will to accommodate Hyde much to the lawyer's consternation, is not simply benevolent. Jekyll is potentially another one of those 'downgoing' clients. Again, this undermines Hyde's role as the central Gothic character. Although it seems that it is Hyde's anomalous appearance in the bachelor community that generates Utterson's investigation into him, Hyde clearly triggers a pre-existing interest; the implication is that if it was not Hyde it would be somebody else. Hyde then is the alibi or justification for a prurient curiosity barely concealed beneath the code of proper conduct.

The second point about the idea of subjectivity as a performance is that it ties in more generally with the theatrical interest of the text. Alan Sandison draws attention to the numerous references to the theatre in the novella and the deliberate staginess of a number of scenes, noting that, 'Virtually all [Stevenon's] major works reflect his intense interest in theatre as *mise-en-scène*, as alternative reality, as space for play-acting or performance; as a

[22] Guy Davidson, 'Sexuality and the Degenerate Body in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*', *Australasian-Victorian-Studies-Annual*, 1 (1995), pp. 31-40 (pp. 36-37). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

prism through which other personalities or selves might be refracted' (p.221). Most of the characters in *Jekyll and Hyde* role-play in one way or another. Jekyll plays the role of Hyde. When Utterson conducts his enquiry into Hyde, he assumes the role of 'Mr. Seek' – the investigation is like a game, tying back in with the image of Hyde as child. Utterson wears a mask before his clients; one that facilitates disclosure and beneath which he marvels at their misdeeds. Jekyll wears a mask of excessive seriousness before the public. Lanyon is described as 'somewhat theatrical to the eye' (p.37). All of which points to the artificial world of the bachelor community, adding to the sense of its being in decline, its inability to regenerate itself. Hyde himself adopts a persona of upper-class detachment, when he is collared by Enfield having trampled the young girl in the street. It is, however, a flawed performance. 'We told the man we could and would make such a scandal out of this,' Enfield tells Utterson, 'as should make his name stink from one end of London to the other' (p.33). Hyde agrees to pay a bribe but exposes Jekyll in the process, first by being seen to disappear through the laboratory door and second by reappearing with a cheque signed in Jekyll's name.

It is necessary to return to Butler by way of approach to the final point to be made about the idea of subjectivity as a performance. As Sarah Salih observes, there is a contradiction in *Gender Trouble* between the description of gender in terms of linguistic performativity and its characterisation as straightforward theatre in the account of parody and drag.[23] Butler clarifies her theories in *Bodies That Matter* (1993), the point being that gender identity is a not a performance, since that would presuppose the existence of a subject or an actor who is doing that performance. There is no pre-existing performer, no

[23] Sarah Salih, *Judith Butler* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 65.

doer behind the deed: individual acts are not performed by the subject, those acts performatively constitute the subject. Performative gender should not be misread as gender as performance, for the latter suggests a subject who reworks their gender at will, promoting what one commentator has called 'a facile politics of subversion'.[24] 'The bad reading goes something likes this', Butler explains in a further attempt at clarification,

> I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other.[25]

The suggestion is that Jekyll is a 'bad reader' of sorts. His belief that he can put on and take off the flesh of Hyde like clothes is a misapprehension. Before looking at why this should be so, I want to continue with the idea of the performative subject a little longer.

The term performative as used by Butler destabilises the idea of a unitary identity and points to a decentred or dispersed subject. Jekyll's statement anticipates this performative subject, in theory if not in practice: 'man is not truly one, but truly two', Jekyll writes at the beginning.

> I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. (p.76)

Viewed through this speculative lens, Jekyll and Hyde are shards of the fragmented subject, two of a multiplicity of unstable selves that seem to exist in a state of undifferentiation similar to that previously identified with Hyde. In one way, the fact that Hyde cannot be split puts the kibosh on this speculation but in another way, this radical decentring makes

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[24] Jonathan Dollimore, *Sex, Literature and Censorship* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 34.
[25] Quoted in Donald E Hall, *Subjectivity* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 126-27.

itself visible in terms of the appearance of a possible third self, the narrating 'I' who refers to Jekyll and Hyde in the third person. This forecast of the splintered subject provides the key image of the text for Hogle, in that it captures 'that horror in our modern being whereby our "identities" are really based on a fluid of potentials that we keep trying to, but cannot, beat down and deny', Jekyll's self-experimentation and eventual suicide being (increasingly drastic) efforts of containment.[26]

### 2.2.3. Stubborn Beast Flesh

Jekyll's belief that he can put on and take off the flesh of Hyde like clothes is undermined by a series of involuntary transformations. One morning, ten months on from his meeting with the worried Utterson, Jekyll wakes up as Hyde, having gone to bed as Jekyll. At first, Jekyll is unaware of the change, although he does feel a sense of dislocation, as if he has woken up in the Soho apartment where Hyde usually sleeps off his adventures. He only realises when he spots Hyde's unmistakable hand – 'lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair' (p.82) – on the bed, which he stares at with incredulity, before rushing to the mirror in order to confirm the change. The sense of dislocation combined with the yellow light of morning, gives the scene an hallucinatory quality. The light shares its colour with the moonlight in *Frankenstein* which heralds or illuminates the creature, but what partly disturbs here is precisely the exposure of the nocturnal prowler Hyde on a 'mid-London morning' (p.82). There is a total disjunction between Jekyll's mind and Hyde's body. The fragmented

[26] Jerrold E. Hogle, 'Stevenson, Robert Louis', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 220-223 (p. 223).

description of the moment of realisation ('my eyes fell upon my hand') and of the disembodied hand itself, recall similarly fragmented descriptions of the creature, Moreau and Kurtz. These images of the bodily disintegration are utterly at odds with the original sense of wholeness the image of Hyde provides. Jekyll is a man of parts, fundamentally riven. Despite all the occasions on which Jekyll has pursued his pleasures as Hyde, the body is now experienced as rebellious and alien to the self, something conveyed by the grammatical shift into the third person ('It was the hand of Hyde'). Altering of its own volition, the body is machine-like, the hand an emphatic image of Jekyll's loss of agency or control. 'Any non-human hand is potentially disturbing', argues Dury,

> an eloquent reminder for the Victorians, both of the evolutionary theories of Darwin and of the ideas of a constant animal element in human nature. The hairy hands of Hyde are a reminder of these fears, especially when combined with the many suggestions of his primitive or animal nature.[27]

The hand of Hyde then symbolises an irrepressible animal (or savage) nature. Moreau tampers with evolutionary laws to accelerate beasts into men, Jekyll to escape from the checks of culture and civilisation: both discover that 'the stubborn beast flesh grows [...] back again' (Wells, p.74). 'I have been made to learn that the doom and burthen of our life is bound for ever on man's shoulders', Jekyll records at the beginning of his narrative, 'and when the attempt is made to cast it off, it but returns upon us' (p.77).

When Jekyll wakes up as Hyde, he panics because he is in the wrong body and Hyde is the wrong home. However, significantly, Jekyll has catered for such a scenario, having taken care to familiarise his household with Hyde. In the process, Jekyll defeats the purpose of his experiment, which is to separate his public and private selves, to avoid

[27] Richard Dury, 'The Hand of Hyde', in *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered*, ed. by William B. Jones, Jr., (London: McFarland 2003), p.104.

scandal. Dressed in Jekyll's clothes, Hyde still has to negotiate the awkward journey from the bedroom to the laboratory and is spotted by a suitably shocked Bradshaw. 'All things seemed to point to this', reflects the restored Jekyll, 'that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self, and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse' (p.83). The wholeness of Hyde is not only at the expense of the splitting but the actual dissolution of Jekyll. 'At this point', suggests Botting, 'the conventional dualities invoked by Jekyll in terms of a lower or secondary self are undermined. The secondary self seems primary, growing in inverse proportion to the sickliness of the better self' (p.142). Hyde's taking over Jekyll is mirrored at the textual level, for Hyde occasionally appears to take over the writing of the statement, for example, when Jekyll is described as 'my city of refuge' following the murder of Carew (p.86). After the involuntary transformation, Jekyll renounces Hyde (albeit half-heartedly, keeping his clothes and Soho residence) and leads a life of extreme self-repression. However, Hyde only re-emerges with renewed vigour in proportion to the force with which he has been denied, culminating in the murder of the MP. 'My devil had been long caged', recalls Jekyll, 'he came out roaring' (p.84). There is no way out here for Jekyll. When he satisfies desire, he 'nourishes' Hyde, who grows in size like a well-fed child: when he denies desire, he starves Hyde, who emerges with 'a more furious propensity to ill', eager to satiate his appetite.

Following the murder of Carew, which Jekyll significantly describes in the first person, suggesting the collapse of his detachment, Hyde returns to the safety of the laboratory and the body of Jekyll. Having taken the drug, Jekyll swaps the role of Hyde for that of the repentant sinner and is overwhelmed by remorse, with the effect that he locks the laboratory door and destroys the key. 'Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and

remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God', records the narrative, once more slipping into the third person (p.85). 'The veil of self-indulgence was rent from head to foot' (p.85). This image of disclosure suggests that Jekyll acquires a sharpening of his moral vision but it only reveals another kind of narcissism, that of guilt. It is no surprise then, that Jekyll's asceticism and repentance fail to halt his slide, just as when Dorian Gray 'spares' Hetty in a supposed act of self-denial, his picture does not regenerate, only worsens: 'in the eyes there was a look of cunning' – Jekyll, one recalls, has 'something of a slyish cast' (p.44) – 'and in the mouth the curved wrinkle of the hypocrite. [...] Vanity? Curiosity? Hypocrisy? Had there been nothing more in his renunciation than that?' (Wilde, pp.211-212).

The murder of Carew is not only witnessed but Hyde recognised. Jekyll's disguise is made redundant and it as the 'ordinary secret sinner' of old that he subsequently transgresses, once his remorse has abated (p.86). Hyde is now a fugitive from the law who seeks shelter inside Jekyll. The second involuntary transformation exposes Hyde in the public space of Regent's Park, a symbolic location for the overthrow of Jekyll given its commemorative purpose (of 'regency' or 'rule'). It is Hyde's potency or alertness that rescues the situation. 'I have more than once observed that in my second character', notes Jekyll, 'my faculties seemed sharpened to a point and my spirits more tensely elastic; thus it came about, where Jekyll perhaps might have succumbed, Hyde rose to the importance of the moment' (p.87). Hyde pens an appeal to Lanyon in Jekyll's handwriting. He manipulates 'the bonds of obligation' that bind the community of bachelors together (p.78, p.87). Despite the shadiness of the request to break into Jekyll's cabinet, Lanyon duly obliges. Hyde similarly exploits the rules of professional confidentiality to extract a vow of

silence from Lanyon before he takes the drug. The irony is that Jekyll-Hyde's life comes to depend upon the very bonds or rules that Jekyll has sought to escape in the form of Hyde.

Hyde is flushed out by increasingly frequent transformations, especially when Jekyll falls asleep. As in *Dracula*, sleep becomes associated with loss of control over the body. Fearful of his own dissolution, the exhausted Jekyll determines to stay awake, contributing towards his decline. As Garrett observes, Jekyll swings from unqualified identification with his new form to equally unqualified denial and disassociation: 'He, I say – I cannot say I. That child of Hell had nothing human; nothing lived in him but fear and hatred' (p.88; Garrett, p.62). Jekyll tries to redraw the boundary between himself and Hyde. The warmth of welcome upon seeing his new reflection is replaced by 'the horror of my other self' (p.89): but that horror of being Hyde, only makes Jekyll more like Hyde, for Hyde's 'fear and hatred' is mirrored in the way in which Jekyll 'hated and feared the thought of that brute' (p.88).

Following his murder of Carew, Hyde seems to be swallowed up by the big city: 'From the time he had left the house in Soho on the morning of the murder, he was simply blotted out' (p.54). Hyde is difficult to describe but the police investigation is further hampered by the fact that, 'the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will' (p.49). The subjective nature of the act of looking of itself makes Hyde hard to pin down. In the meantime, Jekyll reappears both among his social circle and in public – 'he was much in the open air' (p.54). One of the many thematic contrasts of the novella is between outdoors and indoors, with their respective associations of liberty and constraint (though these associations are reversible; it is after all the restrictions of public life that lead to the creation of Hyde). Following the death of Lanyon, we are told how Utterson,

'preferred to speak with Poole upon the doorstep and surrounded by the air and sounds of the open city, rather than to be admitted into that house of voluntary bondage, and to sit with its inscrutable recluse' (p.57). The contrast is emphatic when Utterson and Enfield, on one of their cherished Sunday walks, enjoying the freedom of the city, spot Jekyll at the cabinet window 'like some disconsolate prisoner' (p.58). After a short exchange, the window is rapidly closed as Jekyll is overcome by Hyde, the men catching but a momentary glimpse of the spectacle. The novella ends with Jekyll locked inside his cabinet, sealing up his statement, upon the point of permanent dissolution. In this last respect, following the murder of Carew, Jekyll not London has become Hyde's 'city of refuge', but it is Hyde who proves labyrinthine (p.86). Jekyll's freedom from civilised restraint becomes a form of imprisonment and when the drug runs out, the body of Hyde will have become Jekyll's permanent prison. Jekyll begins taking the drug to change into Hyde. Hyde ends taking the drug in order to stay as Jekyll. When it runs out, with Poole and Utterson breaking down the door, Hyde commits suicide. Significantly, it is Hyde's twitching corpse that is left at the end of the novella. There is no final transformation back into Jekyll, the point being that Hyde is the original self (to that extent, it is appropriate that the secret of Jekyll's dual identity is disclosed when Hyde is seen to change into Jekyll). Hyde is not a role to be played because he is in some sense the actor – specifically, the biological agent that underlies the conscious subject, whose action or mechanism is triggered by the drug. When Jekyll takes the drug for the first time, he is destined to dissolve. Like the Beast Men who resolve to abide by the Law but inevitably break it, his efforts at renunciation are doomed to failure. The fact that he alters his will at an early stage and familiarises his household with Hyde in order to ease Hyde's inheritance or succession, suggests that Jekyll

is not unaware of these things. The idea of Hyde as the originary self is complicated by the possibility of an originary third – one recalls the subject who writes of Jekyll and Hyde in the third person – but the idea is supported by my earlier reading of Hyde as a 'return' to a former state. The assertion that 'man' is not truly one, but truly two' has an additional meaning; that the human subject is secondary to the animal or the primitive state symbolised by the hand of the Hyde. If subjectivity is a performance it is Hyde who conducts. On the verge of disappearing, Jekyll concedes that Hyde is part of him but views him 'as of something [...] inorganic' (p.89). Writes Jekyll, 'This was the shocking thing; that the slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices; that the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned; that what was dead, and had no shape, should usurp the offices of life' (p.89). The jubilant recognition of his more complete image is replaced by an appalled vision of primordial 'slime' and formlessness that seems to transgress the very boundaries of life and death.

In one way, the destruction of the pleasure-seeking Jekyll legitimises the demand for repression. The overt moral framework of the novel tallies with the disciplinary arguments of late-nineteenth-century scientific theories such as degeneration and sexology that *fin-de-siècle* Gothic taps into: the medicalisation of sexuality described by Foucault in *History of Sexuality* (1978), 'in which such theories gave scientific credibility to new forms of social control, specifically creating new types of deviant whose study and containment would legitimate new technologies of power'.[28] 'Progress', concludes Max Nordau in the final paragraph of *Degeneration* (1892), 'is the effect of an ever more rigorous subjugation

[28] Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (London: Penguin, 1999), p. 139. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

of the beast in man, of an ever tenser self-restraint, an ever keener sense of duty and responsibility'.[29] Drawing a comparison between Nordau and Freud, Dollimore observes:

> Degeneration theory was in certain respects a reaction to the perception of something like the death drive understood as an *internal unbinding* of life's highest forms: as an inner, evolutionary process of unbinding which is at work instinctively as the drive to disintegrate and self-destruct. That is why, for Nordau, survival in the face of degeneration requires a vigilant repression of man's 'insensate and self-destructive appetites'. Overt, conscious repression is a necessary condition of progress. (pp.132-3)

Nordau's alternative to disciplined progress, is 'retrogression to the most primitive animality', the kind of social collapse thematised in *Moreau* and threatened by degenerate individuals like Jekyll, who secretly value 'pleasure above discipline, and impulse above self-restraint', especially as he is a so-called pillar of society (p.554). Jekyll's libertine lifestyle escalates in the role of Hyde: by the end of the novel, 'a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind', Jekyll anticipates one of Nordau's enervated and enfeebled sexual perverts, whose excesses have destroyed their physical and mental well-being (p.89; Dollimore, p.132).

In *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), Richard von Krafft-Ebing implicitly calls for 'vigilant repression' when he describes unrestrained sexual desire as 'an abyss that swallows all – honour, fortune, well-being'.[30] Like the description of 'the animal surging up' in *Moreau* and breaking through the human subject, and more pertinently, of Hyde bursting out of his fleshly cage, sexual desire is conceptualised as a potentially explosive power in the individual, a hydraulic force that it is the purpose of civilisation to tame (p.128). The notion of conflict between culture and instinct in sexology clearly feeds into

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[29] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* trans. from the second edition of the German work (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 560. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[30] Quoted in Joseph Bristow, *Sexuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 27.

Freud's perception of the self as a battleground between desire and social constraint and it is a critical commonplace to view Hyde as the 'id' that underlies the civilised veneer of Jekyll.[31] The novel readily opens up to a Freudian reading because of the depth model the Gothic and psychoanalysis share: they both have roots in similar post-Darwinian scientific discourses. If Jekyll's self-destruction legitimises the demand for repression, the description of the emptiness of the men's lives questions whether the personal cost of repression is a price worth paying. *Moreau* raises similar concerns by questioning whether the cruelty and violence of the Law is preferable to the horror of existence without it. 'Progress is the effect of an ever more rigorous subjugation of the beast in man', asserts Nordau, but there is little sense of 'progress' in either novel. The term is neither applicable to the island regime nor to the bachelor community. Furthermore, the demand for repression is not only counterbalanced by its excessive cost. It can also be argued that the demand for repression is not legitimised by – because it is largely responsible for – Jekyll's self-destruction. According to David Punter,

> Jekyll's view seems to be that the split in his being has derived much less from the presence within his psyche of an uncontrollable, passionate self than from the force with which that self has been repressed according to the dictates of social convention.[32]

Like *Moreau*, the novel leaves the reader with an insoluble dilemma. On the one hand, the 'Hyde' inside the human must be repressed because it is an antisocial force. On the other

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[31] See Stephen Heath, '*Psychopathia Sexualis*: Stevenson's *Strange Case*', in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions*, ed. by Lyn Pykett (London and New York: Longman), pp. 64-79, and Michael Kane, *Modern Men: Mapping Masculinity in English and German Literature, 1880-1930* (London and New York: Cassell, 1999), pp. 19-20.
[32] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 2-3. Also see Day, pp. 91-2.

hand, 'repression produces the monster'; desire becomes monstrous because there is no outlet for desire.[33]

[33] According to Byron, 'The idea that repression produces the monster is certainly supported by the results of Jekyll's later attempts to deny his inner desires' (p. 137).

# Chapter 3

## The Gaze in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

### Introduction

In the previous two chapters I have stressed the importance of looking in *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Moreau*, in support of my contention that the gaze is central to the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic: centrality that is especially evident when we turn our attention to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, most obviously with regard to the portrait at the heart of the story, painted by the artist Basil Hallward, coveted by the aesthete Lord Henry Wotton, and inadvertently brought to life by the model himself, when Dorian Gray utters the wish and the portrait appropriates his soul in return for its own immutable quality, splitting the subject in two in the process. The issue of subjectivity is also of fundamental importance, therefore; indeed, Wilde's thematic treatment of the double in terms of the living portrait motif means that the issues of the gaze and subjectivity are bound up with one another.

In addition to the eponymous picture, which first elicits narcissistic joy in Dorian before its visible decay exerts a more lurid fascination, the importance of looking also manifests itself in terms of the novel's theatrical themes – Dorian falls in love with the actress Sibyl Vane, or rather her Shakespearean personae, while society is a theatre for Henry, for whom 'All the world's a stage' – and in the depiction of the city as nightmarish spectacle, for example, as it is traversed on foot by Dorian following his cruel rejection of Sibyl, and by hansom cab on his circuitous route to the opium den in order to suppress the memory of his misdeeds, the protocinematic qualities of which ride will be considered more closely in the following chapter. Much of the activity of looking in the novel obviously centres upon Dorian, with his permanent flawless good looks. The object of the

adoring gaze of the artist, he is stolen by the aesthete for his own partly visual pleasure, before being unleashed upon fashionable society, serving as a style icon for its young male members, whilst pursuing an hedonistic and destructive existence.

In the following chapter I discuss Wilde's treatment of the gaze and subjectivity with reference to each character in turn. This suggests itself as a practical way of focusing upon the twin emphases of my thesis, whilst unpicking what is a complex novel. More to the point, the fact that Basil Hallward and Henry Wotton embody different practices of looking as artist and aesthete respectively, and are characterized by sharply contrasting values, also recommends this approach. Accordingly, I begin with the earnest painter; specifically, the contemplation that the nearly complete portrait prompts in him at the opening of the novel and his fear that the picture reveals the secret of his infatuation with the young man, whom he appears to have fallen in love with at first sight. The discussion of Basil concludes with the horror with which he views the decaying portrait. The conscienceless Lord Henry is second. I start by looking at his initial visual appraisal of the picture and of Dorian, before moving onto the description of him as a kind of analyst. Henry not only derives pleasure from looking at Dorian but at the effect of his influence upon him and an extensive discussion of the issue of influence concludes. One example of Henry's malevolent influence is the way in which he encourages Dorian to view Sibyl's suicide as art, assuaging the lover's guilt in the process. The actress is examined next, both in terms of her short-lived relationship with Dorian and the model of subjectivity behind her character. The remainder of the chapter concentrates upon Dorian and his portrait, in two parts. The first looks at Dorian's initial reaction to the finished portrait, his narcissism and the effect of the fulfilment of his wish. The exact nature of his splitting proves to be

less than clear cut and the problematic issue of conscience is considered. The second continues the discussion of duality with reference to Poe's 'William Wilson', before going on to link the portrait double to previous magic picture stories such as 'The Oval Portrait', which I contextualise in terms of the invention of photography. The picture itself can be read as a kind of mugshot, but I conclude with the suggestion that it anticipates the arrival of the cinematograph.

### 3.1. Basil Hallward

The novel opens in Basil's studio. A picture, 'the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary beauty', stands in the centre of the room, indicative of its central position in the novel, and the artist is surveying his work:

> As the painter looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and, closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake. (pp.5-6)

It is an ambiguous moment. Basil seems to take an initial satisfaction in his own artistic skill, his successful rendering of the young man, before he is overwhelmed by the beauty of the image itself, which sends a shock through him. Given the importance of looking in the novel, moments like this when the act is broken off are of heightened significance. Basil blocks out the image by shutting his eyes but only, it would seem, to secure or savour its stimulating effect. The sight of the image sends the viewer into an aesthetic or erotic reverie; the erotic is aestheticised and the aesthetic eroticised in the novel.

The moment could also be one of shocked recognition, when Basil realises that he has not only captured Dorian's likeness but inadvertently his secret adoration of the young man.

For Basil astonishes Lord Henry, who interrupts his reverie with congratulations upon his finest work to date and a recommendation of the Grosvenor for its exhibition, first, by telling the Lord that he will not be exhibiting the picture and second, on account of the fact that 'I have put too much of myself into it' (p.6). In effect, Basil looks at the picture and sees his adoring gaze of Dorian looking back at him. 'Works of art therefore act as subjective mirrors in Wilde's novel', writes Mighall in his introduction to the novel (p.xxiv). Like Jekyll's mirror, the picture reveals a hidden part of the self; the same sex desire Basil wishes to remain unseen, certainly not subject to public scrutiny. 'My heart shall never be put under their microscope,' he tells Lord Henry (p.14).

What Basil regards as the confessional nature of his picture also violates his aesthetic principles – 'An artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography' (p.14) – as well as those of 'The Preface', for 'To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim' (p.xxiii). The reason for the unintentionally confessional nature of the picture seems to lie with a change in approach. Previously, Basil has drawn Dorian as Paris, Adonis, Antinous and Narcissus: 'it had all been what art should be, unconscious, ideal, and remote' (p.110). The adoring gaze is concealed in an aesthetic cloak, albeit one with heavily homoerotic connotations. Dorian's classical pose seems to act as a kind of filter for the adoring gaze, which is forgone when Basil paints a contemporary picture of Dorian in a realistic style, one which seems to conceal art and reveal the artist.

It could also be a moment of misrecognition or projection on Basil's side; that is to say, the picture may reveal his secret but only to himself ('subjective' has a double meaning in this case), which would explain the surprise of both Lord Henry and Dorian upon hearing

Basil's confession of adoration. Indeed, when Basil first suggests that he has put too much of himself into the picture, Lord Henry thinks he means in terms of physical appearance and amusingly corrects him, though this in turn may be only a reflection upon Henry's way of seeing, notably his preoccupation with the surface of things, so that he only would ever see the image of a very beautiful young man. There again, Basil himself comes to regard his reading of the picture as a mistake once the picture is out of sight. As he explains to Dorian,

> 'as soon as I had got rid of the intolerable fascination of its presence it seemed to me that I had been foolish in imagining that I had seen anything in it, more than that you were extremely good-looking and that I could paint.' (p.111)

Basil will reluctantly retract his correction, for Dorian has also seen something untoward in the picture. The artist assumes it is his gaze of adoration and is left to labour under the illusion by the relieved Dorian.

The confession Lord Henry elicits from Basil regarding Dorian begins with an account of their original meeting at Lady Brandon's, specifically, the painter's emotional first sight of the young man:

> 'I suddenly became conscious that some one was looking at me. I turned half-way round, and saw Dorian Gray for the first time. When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself.' (pp.9-10)

Dorian's beauty is not so much described in this scene, as measured by its mesmeric effect, the overwhelming nature of his visible presence, 'personality' being a sort of viewer's-response conception here. Eye contact is particularly important in the encounter between the two men. Dorian is already looking at Basil, who returns his gaze, or looks at Dorian to find his gaze returned. This is in keeping with the general reversibility of perspective in the

novel, looking and being looked at, a kind of fictional anticipation of a cinematic shot / reverse shot. Dorian's beautiful gaze is powerful. It drains the life out of Basil, terrifies him even; a feeling he rationalises as a kind of instinctive awareness of the young man's potential capacity to totally dominate him, with its partly sexual implications. It appears that the way in which Basil shuts his eyes when looking at the picture, the shock he receives, in the opening scene, is an echo of Basil's original view of Dorian; only in that first instance, Basil turns away and makes to leave the room. If his reaction sounds characteristically histrionic, his impulse to flee is the correct one, for he has come face to face with the man who will not only totally dominate him, but eventually murder him, too. As it happens, his path is blocked by Lady Brandon and when he ends up opposite Dorian once more, the men again trade looks. This time their fate is sealed up within their mutual gaze, for Basil asks to be introduced. In this way, the artist allows himself to succumb to the fascination of the beautiful young man, suggestive of a kind of masochistic quality in Basil, a surrender of the self, albeit one which simultaneously allows him to produce his best work ever.[1] Or, perhaps Basil has no choice at all, making him Dorian's first victim, for he continues to exert a powerful (and destructive) influence over those who come into contact with him. In the case of Alan Campbell, 'it was music that had brought him and Dorian Gray together – music and that indefinable attraction that Dorian seemed able to exercise when he wished, and indeed exercised often without being conscious of it' (pp.158-9). The 'indefinable' nature of Dorian's magnetism links him to Hyde, whose

[1] Basil seems complicit in creating the situation in which he will become a desiring victim. Gilles Deleuze contends that masochism is located in a context or setting, rather than a person. Deleuze rejects the dialectical relationship of masochism with sadism in his essay 'Coldness and Cruelty', in *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty & Venus in Furs*, by Gilles Deleuze and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (New York: Zone, 1989).

ugliness is not sufficient to account for the repulsive effect he has upon the observer: 'There is something more, if I could find a name for it,' reckons Utterson (p.41).

The fact that Dorian is looking at Basil to begin with is suggestive. It might be simply that he singles out the artist on account of the otherwise uninteresting people who attend the gathering ('huge overdressed dowagers and tedious Academicians' according to the bored Basil), but perhaps it also hints at the latent homosexuality that Lord Henry subsequently uncovers (p.9). The looks Basil and Dorian exchange suggest a 'pick-up' of sorts ('trade'), although Dorian is tantamount to an innocent child at the beginning of the novel, despite being twenty years old. In the original magazine version of *Dorian Gray*, Wilde thought about including the suggestion of a dangerous street pick-up, when Dorian walks at random through the grim city streets after his cruel rejection of Sibyl Vane ('A man with curious eyes had suddenly peered into his face and then dogged him with stealthy footsteps, passing and repassing him many times').[2] More generally, the gaze often seems to involve a kind of covert communication between males, or optical dialogue. Lunch at Lady Agatha's offers a more benign example perhaps, as Lord Henry follows up a flattering remark to Dorian with a look which receives 'a bright answering glance' (p.41).

Dorian's innocent nature is a source of attraction to Basil but unlike Lord Henry, it is a quality he seeks to preserve rather than despoil; hence, his consternation when having come to comfort Dorian after the death of Sibyl Vane, he is met with Dorian's studied indifference: 'You look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and affectionate

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[2] Oscar Wilde, 'The Picture of Dorian Gray 1890', in Donald L. Lawler (ed.), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York and London: Norton, 1988), pp. 173-281 (p. 215). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

then' (p.105). The novel hints that Basil himself is a sexual subject in his love of secrecy and his absences from town, although his adoring gaze is couched in aesthetic terms. Having heard his confession, Lord Henry calls it 'quite a romance,' before adding the qualification 'a romance of art' (p.15). The erotic subtext is clearly hinted at in the slippage. Yet it is difficult to decide whether Basil's aestheticisation of Dorian is simply a coded homoeroticism, or a kind of spiritualised homoeroticism that deliberately distances desire, remembering that Basil will visibly recoil from the evidence of Dorian's sexual transgressions in the form of the degenerate picture. We can also take Basil at face value. Dorian's perfect beauty means that he is almost not quite human in the eyes of the artist, who views him as an 'ideal thing' rather than as a person. Dorian is also his male Muse:

> 'he is much more to me than a model or a sitter. [....] His personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style. I see things differently, I think of them differently. I can now recreate life in a way that was hidden from me before.' (p.13)

Thus, when Dorian announces that he is to be married to Sibyl, Basil experiences an acute sense of loss. As he drives to the theatre to see her act, 'His eyes darkened, and the crowded, flaring streets became blurred to his eyes'; Basil may be in tears but the indistinct streets are also symbolic of his fading artistic vision (p.78).

Basil is also characterised by his moral vision, which makes it significant that he is obliterated from the pages of the novel, for Dorian not only kills him, but has his body chemically erased; indeed, the very first thing we are told about Basil is that he disappears without trace, rather like Jekyll (from the public's point of view). The artist repeatedly objects to Lord Henry's cynicism, convinced that he does not believe what he says and that he is better than he pretends to be. He also questions Lord Henry's theory of Individualism, speaks with approval of Sibyl's spiritualizing effect upon the lower classes and reproaches

Dorian for his apparent indifference to her death. Basil also confronts Dorian with the terrible rumours surrounding his personal life. He appears to possess 'a moral conviction inseparable from an essentialist conception of self', to borrow Dollimore's description of the young André Gide.[3] By way of response, Dorian shows Basil the living picture. He is the only other person who sees it. With a theatrical flourish that recalls Hyde's transformation into Jekyll in front of Lanyon, Dorian rips off the curtain concealing the picture. Basil's eyes are met with a repulsive face which grins back at him and he cries out in horror:

> There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! It was Dorian's face that he was looking at! The horror, whatever it was, had not entirely spoiled the marvellous beauty. [...] Yes, it was Dorian himself. (p.149)

This moment of recognition is echoed in *Dracula* when Harker spots the Count on the streets of Piccadilly – 'It is the man himself!' – although it is not Dorian to the extent that it is his picture (p.172).

Basil's gaze of repulsion clearly echoes Utterson's response when he scrutinises Hyde's features. The vagueness of 'something' is reminiscent of the lawyer's inability to pin down the source of the poisonous effect. Twice Basil inspects the picture with the aid of a lighted candle, the first to confirm that the picture is his, the second to try and locate the change:

> The surface seemed to be quite undisturbed, and as he had left it. It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away. (p.150)

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[3] Jonathan Dollimore, 'Different Desires: Subjectivity and Transgression in Wilde and Gide', in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions* (see Heath, above), pp. 127-148 (p. 129).

Again, the horror is not quite locatable. It is described in external means (the transformation) but something is going on inside; as is the case with Jekyll, it would appear that the body is being internally cannibalized. Like the effect of Hyde's transformation on Lanyon, the picture not only horrifies Basil but seems to have a destructive result upon the viewer; after the initial inspection, he turns to look at Dorian 'with the eyes of a sick man' (p.149). Through those eyes, Basil reads the diseased body in terms of punishment for his adoring gaze, as well as for Dorian's own narcissism. His response is to suggest that they pray.

When Dorian originally utters the wish, Lord Henry undercuts the seriousness of the moment by joking that it would be tough luck on Basil's picture if it was to come true. Were he present in the above scene, he might joke that it would be tough luck on Dorian were their prayer to reverse the wish. In the event, Dorian's hatred of the painter of the portrait, the man he regards as the author of his misfortune, intensifies and he stabs him, the only transgression we see in the novel, but the point is made about Lord Henry. It fact, it is difficult to imagine him and the living picture in the same room, for he belongs to the glittering surface of the novel, thematically associated with the West End, not the Gothic depths associated with the East End, which the picture symbolically represents. Where the gaze of the artist is engaged, emotionally invested and moral, the gaze of the aesthete and dandy is detached, analytical and amoral, cynical and misogynistic. He consumes art but he also makes conversation his art form. He speaks with the voice of 'The Preface', whose maxims are very difficult to read because they seem to be gestures against the moral pieties of criticism, reversing the notions of surface and depth, for example. His aphorisms

continue to invert given values and therefore set up a facetious or playful polemic in the novel.

### 3.2. Lord Henry Wotton

Like Basil, Lord Henry takes visual pleasure in Dorian; indeed, he is desperate to own the picture, having to make do with an extensive collection of photographs instead. He likens its beautiful male image to 'Adonis' and 'Narcissus', indicative of the aesthetic quality of his gaze, but also its coded homoerotic interest. To Lord Henry it appears 'as if [Dorian] was made out of ivory and rose-leaves', so that he also conceives of Dorian as an expensive object or ornament (p.6). The description of 'ivory' also sets up a comparison between Dorian and Sibyl with her 'little ivory body': and suggests how Dorian comes to see like Lord Henry (p.54). He will objectify Sibyl in the same way that Lord Henry objectifies him. At the beginning, Lord Henry is more interested in the fascinating picture than the model, though the fact that Basil has withheld Dorian's name in the bid to maintain possession of him piques his curiosity. It is Basil's confession that triggers the necessity of seeing Dorian in the flesh and there is a parallel here with the opening scene of *Jekyll and Hyde*, in which Utterson's interview with Enfield, which includes the description of an overpowering visual encounter, results in the compulsion to see Hyde.

Lord Henry's initial view of Dorian makes an interesting point of contrast with Basil:

> Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept

> himself unspotted from the world. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him. (p.19)

Lord Henry has been primed for the sight of Dorian, both by the picture and Basil's confession, so the spectacle of his physical beauty is not likely to carry quite the same impact, though clearly it does make a powerful impression. Yet the way in which Lord Henry fixes Dorian in his gaze, scanning or dissecting the physical features of the young man's face – 'lips', 'eyes' and 'hair' becomes a kind of shorthand for subsequent descriptions of the living picture but the point is that the gaze breaks the body into fetishised pieces as is the case in *Trilby* – could not be more different to Basil. The aesthete studies Dorian as if he were an artwork in fact, something further suggested by the colour details ('scarlet', 'blue' and 'gold'). By establishing these in the reader's mind, Wilde makes the subsequent deterioration of the picture more effective. The description then shifts from Dorian's physical description to an awareness of his effect upon the observer ('trust'), although again the source of that effect is allusive ('something'). That 'something' will make him dangerously attractive, what with all the men and women who seem to fall for Dorian or become enthralled by him, only for their lives to culminate in disgrace. Lord Henry is the only person who remains untouched by his relationship with Dorian, although he goes to the devil in his own way, for he is divorced at the end of the novel and the subject of scandal himself. Besides, he is responsible for Dorian's corruption. The conclusion of Lord Henry's description adds a physiognomic quality to his gaze, for the flawless quality of Dorian's physical features seem to indicate a morally purity ('unspotted'), just as from Jekyll's point of view, Hyde's ugly features indicate his moral corruption ('evil was written broadly and plainly on the face [...] [and] had left on the body an imprint of deformity and decay') (p.79). It is almost as if Dorian has not lived; that he is

'unspotted' because he has not been seen by the world and is brought into being by the act of gazing, as if newly born.

Lord Henry 'steals' Dorian from Basil but his reaction to the news of his relationship with Sibyl is revealing. It simply stirs him into contemplation:

> Lord Henry's heavy eyelids drooped, and he began to think. Certainly few people had ever interested him so much as Dorian Gray, and yet the lad's adoration of some one else caused him not the slightest pang of annoyance or jealousy. It made him a more interesting study. (p.56)

Lord Henry is a spectator but also a kind of analyst:

> He had been always enthralled by the methods of natural science, but the ordinary subject-matter of that science had seemed to him trivial and of no import. And so he had begun vivisecting himself, as he had ended by vivisecting others. Human life – that appeared the one thing worth investigating. Compared to it there was nothing else of any value. (p.56)

The vivisection metaphor conflates the gaze with touch; it indicates a kind of visceral quality to the gaze, one that also suggests harm or pain. Not unlike Moreau, Lord Henry's analytical gaze is divorced from moral or ethical considerations, which is ominous as far as his quasi-scientific interest in Dorian is concerned, whom he regards as 'a subject made to his hand', again, suggesting a kind of tactile quality to the gaze (p.58).

At Selby Royal, the Duchess of Monmouth (Gladys) tells Lord Henry and Dorian that 'you men love with your eyes', simply meaning that physical looks are the source of sexual attraction for men (p.188).[4] Yet there is a strong sense the men also (make) love with their eyes as opposed to their bodies in the novel. 'Ordinary sexual desire is not the issue', suggests Camille Paglia with reference to Basil's domination by Dorian and the 'homoerotic Platonism' of his confession to the model: 'Greek idealism is a glorification of

[4] 'We women, as some one says, love with our ears, just as you men love with your eyes, if you ever love at all' (p. 188).

the eye, not a glut of the senses. [...] Basil seeks not to sleep with Dorian but to paint his picture'.[5] It could be said that ordinary sexual desire is not the issue with Lord Henry either; he seeks not to sleep with him but 'to enjoy Dorian from a spectator's point of view', which he does from the outset.[6] When Dorian turns up at the studio, 'Lord Henry looked at him. Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome [...]. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him' (p.19). And as Basil prepares to add the final touches to the picture, 'Lord Henry flung himself into a large wicker arm-chair, and watched him' (p.26), a gesture that is repeated at the end of the novel. 'The elder man lay back and looked at him with half-closed eyes' (p.205).

Lord Henry takes pleasure in Dorian from an aesthetic spectator's point of view (even when Dorian is not present), as his response to the story of Dorian's parentage suggests. According to Lord Henry's uncle, his mother, Lady Margaret Devereux, runs off with an impoverished subaltern, who is killed in a duel, rumoured to have been arranged by her father. She dies shortly after having given birth to Dorian, who is brought up by his grandfather. This background adds to the symbolic significance of the location of the attic in which Dorian hides the picture:

> He had not entered the place for more than four years – not, indeed, since he had used it as a play-room when he was a child, and then as a study when he grew somewhat older. It was a large, well-proportioned room, which had been specially built by the last Lord Kelso for the use of the little grandson whom, for his strange likeness to his mother, and also for other reasons, he had always hated and desired to keep at a distance. (p.117)

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[5] Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 519. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[6] David Seed, 'Oscar Wilde's 'Essay on Decorative Art': *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Swansea Review* 3 (May 1987), pp. 42-55 (pp. 46-47). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

'Ironically', notes Seed, 'the place of innocence becomes the setting for furtive concealment and then murder', which is true (1987, p.46). At the same time, the concealment of the picture is also an extension of the room's original purpose:, to keep Dorian, who reminds the grandfather of his guilt, out of sight. Lord Henry reduces the story to a short sequence of events in his head as he walks to Lady Agatha's for lunch:

> A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad passion. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Months of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man. Yes; it was an interesting background. It posed the lad, made him more perfect as it were. (p.37)

'Background' not only refers to personal history but also has pictorial connotations, while 'posed' implies the application of the principles of portraiture. Basil turns life into art through painting. An artist in his own way, Lord Henry turns life into art through contemplation (and in accordance with 'The Preface', for 'No artist has ethical sympathies' (p.xxiii)). The sequential details of Dorian's background are distilled in such a way as to bring him into hyperbolic relief ('more perfect') as an artwork. Dorian's background adds depth to Lord Henry's mental picture of him, so that he becomes 'this son of Love and Death' (p.38).

Lord Henry is not alone in enjoying Dorian from a spectator's point of view. Aesthetic cultivation transforms the self into spectacle in the novel and Dorian as it were becomes all spectacle in the suspension of the aging process, a figure to be appropriated again and again in different male gazes. This visual reappropriation suggests that there is more than one picture of Dorian Gray (Lord Henry's mental picture adds to Basil's portrait). According to Seed,

> In spite of the novel's singular title we actually receive several representations of Dorian in different situations and from different perspectives. The efficiency

> of representation is thus brought into question. How far is Dorian seen by anyone in the book? Does he possess a stable identity, or is it fragmented into a series of partial views? (1987, p.45)

Dorian is the object of visual pleasure, though objectification does not necessarily equal disempowerment. When Dorian wants the picture moved upstairs into his old play-room, Mr Hubbard, the frame-maker, makes an exception of leaving his shop: 'There was something about Dorian that charmed everybody. It was a pleasure even to see him' (p.116). 'Everybody' includes Hubbard's 'somewhat rough-looking assistant' (p.116): upon departure he 'glanced back at Dorian with a look of shy wonder in his rough, uncomely face. He had never seen any one so marvellous' (p.119).[7] If the assistant is charmed by the sight of Dorian, the narrator is not indifferent to the sight of this working class youth, whose simple presence softly hints that 'rough trade' is among the possible vices Dorian indulges in during his forays into the East End.[8]

If Lord Henry enjoys Dorian as a spectator, he takes especial pleasure in watching the effect of his 'influence', in the form of his monologues, upon him. For example, when Dorian declares his passion for the actress Sibyl Vane, 'Lord Henry watched him with a subtle sense of pleasure. How different he was now from the shy, frightened boy he had met in Basil's studio!'(p.54). The change is self-gratifying:

> He was conscious – and the thought brought a gleam of pleasure into his brown agate eyes – that it was through certain words of his, musical words said with musical utterance, that Dorian Gray's soul had turned to this white girl and bowed in worship before her. To a large extent the lad was his own creation. (p.57)

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[7] According to Paglia, 'Like the star of film or popular music, Dorian draws heterosexuals into bisexual responses' (p. 522).

[8] For a discussion of Wilde's attitude to rough trade, see Neil McKenna, *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde* (London: Arrow Books), pp. 273-75.

In the light of thoughts like these, Lord Henry has been likened to Frankenstein and Dorian his creature, though he more closely anticipates Moreau than resembles Frankenstein in his unscrupulous attitude to his 'creation'; responsibility is simply not an issue.[9] The key theme of influence has attracted considerable critical attention. In one of his notes on the novel, Mighall comments,

> There is the influence which Dorian has on Basil's art, the influence Lord Henry exerts on the impressionable Dorian, the corresponding 'fatal' influence which Dorian has on young men, the influence of heredity and 'race-instinct' have on various individuals, the influence of real life on Sibyl Vane's acting, the influence that Dorian's actions have on his portrait, and the influence of certain books on their readers. (Wilde, p.236)

In her essay 'The Mesmerizing of Dorian Gray' (1984), with Wilde's interest in mesmeric fiction and his enthusiastic reviews of novels like *Helen Davenant* (1889) for *The Woman's World* in mind, Kerry Powell argues that *Dorian Gray* is a mesmeric novel in all but name.

> [Dorian Gray's] almost mechanical, involuntary subservience to his mentor Wotton puts him in the company of a host of nineteenth century characters who move through their own stories with dazed acquiescence. Dorian Gray, like his fellow sufferers, must in fact be numbered among the victims of *mesmerism*. [...] Thus Dorian Gray, under the domination of Lord Henry, sleepwalks his way in an instant from boyhood innocence to dedicated hedonism.[10]

Powell goes on to suggest that '*Dorian Gray* engages the leading characteristics of mesmeric fiction, [...] without anywhere mentioning the word "mesmerism" itself. [...] Essentially, therefore, the mesmerizing of Dorian Gray was a metaphorical, not an actual, proceeding' (pp.12-14). The literal power of the hypnotic gaze will be considered more closely in the final chapter, with reference to exotic villains like Svengali, the Beetle and Dracula.

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[9] See Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University, 1995), p. 54 and Smith, p. 161. Showalter draws a comparison between Lord Henry and Moreau (p. 178).

[10] Kerry Powell, 'The Mesmerizing of Dorian Gray', in *The Victorian Newsletter* 65 (Spring 1984), pp. 10-15 (pp. 10-11). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

More recently, Thurschwell has looked at 'the *fin-de-siècle* influential villain', arguing that 'the rhetoric surrounding Oscar Wilde's arrest and imprisonment only marks the culminating point of a series of popular portrayals of the aesthete as a dangerous influential monster' (p.38). With characteristic irony and in a way that highlights Dorian's childlike innocence, Lord Henry's first monologue opens on the immorality of influence: for the influenced person 'becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him,' whereas, 'The aim of life is self-development' (p.20).[11] However, as Lord Henry continues, using the discourse of degeneration:

> 'People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. [...] Courage has gone out of the race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion – these are the two things that govern us.' (p.20)

His comments bring to mind Wells's critique of society and religion in *Moreau* in terms of the depiction of the Law. He describes people as if they were Beast Men on the island ('people' refers to society in general but implicitly men who love men, of course), for Moreau suppresses by fear their true natures.[12] Lord Henry's monologue moves on to the dangers of 'self-denial':

> 'The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind, and poisons us. [...] The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for

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[11] According to Thurschwell, 'Lord Henry's mesmerizing words are paradoxically about the very necessity of living for oneself – realizing one's own nature perfectly through living out one's every fantasy and desire. However, in the process of exhorting that creed, he claims to know Dorian's wishes and fantasises – he seems to be inside his mind, moulding his desires' (p. 61).

[12] Showalter states, 'In the introduction to his collected works, H. G. Wells claimed that in writing *The Island of Dr Moreau* in 1895, he had been thinking of Oscar Wilde's trial: "There was a scandalous trial about that time, the graceless and pitiless downfall of a man of genius, and this story was the response of an imaginative mind to the reminder that humanity is but animal, rough-hewn to a reasonable shape and in perpetual internal conflict between instinct and injunction. The story embodies this ideal, but apart from this embodiment it has no allegorical quality. It is written just to give the utmost possible vividness to that conception of men as hewn and confused and tormented beasts"' (p. 178).

> the things it had forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful.'[13] (p.21)

As Chris Baldick succinctly states,

> Within the logic of what we now call repression, the true monstrosity of unlicensed desires resides not in the desire itself nor in its object but in the repressive law. The 'monstrous', Wilde understands, is the image of the prohibition which excludes it, and of the hypocritical moral code which recoils from its own creations.[14]

Again, one is reminded of *Moreau*; the way in which the novel suggests that it is not the Beast Men that are monstrous but the Law itself, as Prendick's sympathy for the creatures makes clear following the death of the Leopard Man. The novel complicates this suggestion in its depiction of the breakdown of the Law and the ensuing anarchy on the island. Prendick's sympathy is short-lived but evaporates altogether when Moreau's creations degenerate into so-called 'Beast Monsters'; paradoxically, it rests upon the maintenance of the Law of which it is critical (p.126). In *Moreau*, Wells regards morality, law and religion as both cruel and ridiculous, but there is no comfort in the thought of their being thrown aside either. One is also reminded of *Jekyll and Hyde*; the way in which the novel suggests that the monstrosity resides less in Hyde, than in the men's strict codes of behaviour and the absence of any outlet for desire. The opening description of Utterson hints at the dangers of self-denial and as Smith notes more generally, 'Stevenson's novella implicitly demonises the notion of the respectable middle-class professional [...] and suggests that true horror is not reflected in Hyde but through the fragile, because empty, world inhabited

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[13] According to McKenna, '"Desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful" is a not-so-coded reference to the ancient laws against sodomy and the passing, four years earlier in 1885, of the Labouchere Amendment, which outlawed oral sex and mutual masturbation between men. If men who love men are to realise themselves, are to arrive at their erotic destiny, then morality, law, religion must all be thrown aside. They were prophetic words. Oscar would deliberately cast them all aside in the quest to fulfil his own erotic destiny' (pp. 168-69).

[14] Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 148.

by the bourgeois professional' (pp.6-7). What is implicit in *Jekyll and Hyde* is explicit in *Dorian Gray*. Stevenson's social critique is brought to the surface by Wilde through Lord Henry, who not only discourses on the dangers of self-denial but makes the puritanical and hypocritical nature of society the butt of his wit.[15]

The fact that Lord Henry's words are primarily designed to influence Dorian, to awaken his desiring self, perhaps suggests that the reader should be wary of taking them at face value, although as he has already told Basil, 'the value of an idea has nothing whatsoever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it' (p.12). In fact, the idea that self-denial or repression poisons the self may be applicable to the Beast Men for whom life 'was one long internal struggle' (p.93), or the bachelors of *Jekyll and Hyde* with their empty lives, but it is more problematic in relation to Dorian and his picture, given that its monstrous icon is testament to an almost unlimited self-indulgence: 'you must be worse even than those who talk against you fancy you to be!' says Basil upon examining the picture (p.150). The degenerate picture suggests that unlicensed desire, not the repressive law, is monstrous; it rejects Lord Henry's notion that monstrosity is culturally constructed. It corresponds with Basil's idea that 'Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face' (p.143).

Lord Henry's words make an immediate physical impression upon Dorian. Oblivious to his speech, Basil notices 'only that a look had come into the lad's face that he had never seen there before', one which he sets down upon the canvas (p.21). This is Lord Henry's contribution to the painting. He brings about the look that makes the portrait what

[15] 'There is a point in taking Wotton as Wilde's surrogate in the novel since both speak out against the stifling effects of Victorian Puritanism, but stabilizing Wotton's beliefs is virtually impossible since he is as much of an actor as Sybil Vane' (Seed, 1987, p. 47).

it is; his mesmerising words effectively pose Dorian. To that extent the picture is a collaborative effort – as is Dorian himself, in the sense that he is brought into being (seduced into being really), by the sight of Basil's finished picture and Lord Henry's argument for a 'new Hedonism', a distortion of Pater's infamous 'Conclusion' to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873). Paglia observes how, 'Like Wilde himself, Henry cites and misinterprets Pater, twisting Pater's monastic contemplativeness towards praxis [...]. Pater espoused perceptual refinement, not sexual action. Wilde's ruin was to come from his materializations of his master's doctrine' (pp.516-17). Lord Henry's words rapidly create turmoil in Dorian: 'Stop!' he tells Lord Henry. 'You bewilder me' (p.21). In this instance, his words – 'words spoken [...] with wilful paradox in them', seem to stimulate desire, coded in terms of 'some secret chord [...] that [Dorian] felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses' (p.21). Neil McKenna describes this as 'a Damascene moment of erotic self-revelation. [...] It is a kind of forcible coming out, an erotic epiphany'.[16] 'A kind of forcible coming out' literally describes the initial action of the drug on Jekyll. Hyde, Jekyll's (homo)sexual self, is not created but released, and something similar seems to be happening in terms of Lord Henry's influence on Dorian. Thurschwell also likens this to 'a coming-out moment' (p.62). Lord Henry takes his own pleasure in the startling effect of his words, the new look he has produced in Dorian: 'With his subtle smile, Lord Henry watched him. [...] He felt intensely interested. He was amazed at the sudden impression that his words had produced [...]. How fascinating the lad was!' (p.22).

[16] Neil McKenna, *The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde* (London: Arrow Books, 2004), p. 169. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

The paradox is a key component of Lord Henry's verbal influence and of his verbal artillery, or monstrous wit, more generally.[17] 'Familiar objects are defamiliarized by being seen upside-down', Norman Page notes with reference to the Wildean paradox, 'and to subject received opinions to this process is to expose them to radical questioning'.[18] It is modestly left to one of the novel's minor characters, Mr Erskine, to spell out its claims: 'the way of paradoxes is the way of truth. To test Reality we must see it on the tight-rope. When the Verities become acrobats we can judge them' (p.40).[19] It is not what Lord Henry says that is important necessarily, so much as how he says it; his intelligence may be a question of style rather than content.[20] In *De Profundis*, Wilde draws an interesting parallel between the paradox and his homosexuality. 'What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion'.[21] Previously, it was suggested how Lord Henry belongs to, or is largely responsible for, the glittering conversational surface of the novel, thematically associated with the West End, not the Gothic depths associated with the East End and which the picture symbolically represents, but with Wilde's comment in mind, we can see how the glittering paradoxical surface is actually suggestive of the dark

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[17] Thurschwell notes the paradoxical operation of paradox itself on Dorian here: 'the word puzzle that should exist ideally in itself, and for itself with no relation to real life', and yet 'seems to be at the very source of the self at this moment when influence takes effect' (p. 62).

[18] 'Introduction', in Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. by Norman Page (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1998), p. 9.

[19] Wilde might well agree with such a remark but it is too pompous to be allowed to stand. In typical fashion, he deflates it: '"Dear me!" said Lady Agatha, "how you men argue! I am sure I never can make out what you are talking about"' (p. 40).

[20] For a discussion of Lord Henry's style, see Seed, 1987, p. 47. One of the characteristics of that style is his repeated use of fiscal metaphors. 'Don't squander the gold of your days', he tells Dorian with reference to his youth (Dorian is golden haired of course) (p. 24). When asked by the politician Sir Thomas Burdon what changes he would recommend to help solve the problem of the East End, Lord Henry replies, 'as the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over-expenditure of sympathy, I would suggest that we should appeal to Science to put us straight' (p. 41). Lord Henry also dismisses the personal consequences of the analytical gaze thus: 'What matter what the cost was? One could never pay too high a price for any sensation' (p. 56). And following the death of Sibyl Vane: '[Good resolutions] are simply cheques that men draw on a bank where they have no account' (p. 97).

[21] Oscar Wilde, *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1948; repr. 1977), p. 913. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

homoerotic depths, of which the painting is an emblem, as a surface that has a paradoxical 'inner' life.

Lord Henry ruminates on the 'joy' of influence as he walks over to his aunt's (in fact, he is so self-absorbed that he overshoots his destination):

> Talking to [Dorian] was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch of the bow.... There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment; to hear one's intellectual views echoed back to one with all the added music of passion and youth; to convey one's temperament into another as though it were a subtle fluid or a strange perfume: there was a real joy in that, perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, an age grossly carnal in its pleasures, and grossly common in its aims. (p.37)

In the discussion of Wells, the image of Moreau fixing the Leopard Man in his gaze and seemingly dispossessing him of his soul was considered (in terms of a kind of spiritual rape). Lord Henry's notion of influence, verbal rather than visual, involves a more rarefied form of psychic invasion or domination, as the music metaphor suggests. Powell makes an apt comparison between Lord Henry and Du Maurier's figure of Svengali, who literally turns

> a tone deaf, weak-willed heroine into 'a singing machine – an organ to play upon – an instrument of music – a Stradivarius' who captivates concert audiences all over Europe. Thus for Wotton as for Svengali, the reward of dominating another person derives partly from the aesthetic potential in such a relationship. (p.49)

Despite the sensual nature of the musical metaphor, again, ordinary sexual desire is not the issue, as the narrator makes clear in the contrast between the refined joy of influence and the 'grossly carnal [...] pleasures' that characterise the age, and which Dorian presumably indulges in, represented by the degenerate picture (p.37). Basil's homoerotic Platonism has

its more aggressive counterpart in what McKenna has described as 'a kind of spiritual sodomy' on Lord Henry's part (p.170).

Earlier, it was noted how Lord Henry has been likened to Frankenstein and Dorian his creature. Dorian will be considered more closely shortly, though suffice to say that there is an analogy to be made between the composite creature, fabricated from separate body parts, and Dorian's own conception of identity (via the notion of heredity): 'man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead' (p.137). The description of Lord Henry's influence points to the potential fluidity or multiplicity of identity.[22] The pleasure Lord Henry takes in Dorian is reminiscent of Jekyll and Hyde. In the discussion of Stevenson, the voyeuristic relationship between Jekyll and Hyde was considered: Jekyll looks on as Hyde transgresses, in a way that allows him to satisfy illicit desire without accepting that he is responsible. As Dryden observes,

> Dorian is, in a sense, Wotton's 'double', the Hyde-like character through whom Wotton can, like Jekyll, live the experiences denied to an older man. When Wotton muses that to 'a large extent the lad was his own creation' and concludes that it 'was delightful to watch him' we are reminded of Jekyll's 'leap of welcome' at the sight of Hyde in the mirror, and his acknowledgement that, 'This, too, was myself'. Wotton gains the same kind of perverse pleasure from Dorian's infamous career as Jekyll initially does from that of his 'creation'. (p.121)

This needs to be qualified. Lord Henry clearly becomes familiar with Dorian's dreadful reputation, as the following remark at the end of the novel shows: 'I wish I could change places with you, Dorian. The world has cried out against us both, but it has always worshipped you' (p.207). In wishing to change places with the physically untarnished

[22] As Powell notes, 'Lord Henry *is* Dorian Gray, psychologically if not substantially' (p. 13).

Dorian, he echoes the youth's initial wish to swap places with the picture, a nice reversal that also adds symmetry to the novel. However, Lord Henry seems to have little idea of the extent of Dorian's transgressions. 'You don't know everything about me,' Dorian replies. 'I think that if you did, even you would turn from me' (p.207). Dorian carries out the command to search for new sensations in ways that are at first surprising (his courtship of Sibyl) and then unimaginable (the murder of Basil) to Lord Henry. When Dorian asks how Lord Henry would react to the suggestion that he has murdered Basil, he replies, 'I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn't suit you' (p.203). In a sense, as with Frankenstein and Jekyll, Lord Henry's 'creation' slips beyond his control, although there are no repercussions as such for him. Judith Halberstam comments, '[Lord Henry'] is never chastened or shamed, regretful or sorrowed; he never looks for meaning in depth or truth in reality. Lord Henry [...] survives because he has no conscience, he is not available to discipline'.[23] In fact, this is not quite true. Lord Henry's mask starts to slip at the end of the novel: 'I have sorrows, Dorian, of my own, that even you know nothing of' (p.206).

The identities of Frankenstein and Jekyll are inextricably bound up with their creations, in psychological and physical terms respectively; indeed, the psychological and the physical come together with respect to Dorian's relationship with his picture double. It is different with Lord Henry and exactly how far his influence stretches is open to question. Paglia takes the idea of Dorian as Lord Henry's double further than Dryden, suggesting 'Dorian *becomes* Lord Henry, the beautiful boy turned Decadent aesthete. [...] An act of homosexual generation has occurred, a hermaphroditic cloning of sexual personae' (p.518).

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[23] Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham: Duke University, 1995), p. 73. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

Certainly, following the death of Sibyl, Dorian comes to entertain very similar sentiments to those originally articulated by Lord Henry, for example, on the topic of the evils of self-denial:

> But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon man moving through History, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. [...] There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape. (p.126)

He also adopts Lord Henry's creed of 'a new Hedonism', although this is complicated by the fact that Dorian appears not to search for new sensations for their own sake, but in order to dampen down the very conscience that distinguishes him from his mentor, and if Lord Henry's influence makes Dorian appear almost devoid of agency, something that is also suggested by the way in which all his transgressions occur offstage, Wilde seems to recognise this at one point and make redress.[24] When Basil confesses to Dorian to having been dominated by him, Dorian wonders, 'if he himself would ever be so dominated by the personality of a friend. Lord Henry had the charm of being very dangerous. But that was all' (p.111). This is hardly convincing; that Dorian is deluded here is underlined by the arrival that afternoon of the 'yellow book' that 'poisons' him – a gift from Lord Henry. According to Thurschwell,

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[24]According to Anne Margaret Daniel, 'Dorian's actions from the time of Sibyl's death are reported as rumors, and generally in a passive voice. Wilde's use of the passive is endemic in his prose; it allows a speaker or narrator to be noncommittal, to depersonalize a situation. *De Profundis* [...] bears a particular sense of something having been done to, rather than by, Wilde. Similarly, Dorian's agency is removed, and doubt cast on his actions, by the passive' ('Wilde the Writer', in Frederick S Roden (ed), *Palgrave Advances in Oscar Wilde Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 51).

> The novel contains two apparently contradictory attitudes towards the power of influence. On the one hand, Dorian seems to have been fatally influenced, both by Lord Henry and by the 'poisonous' yellow book Lord Henry gives him [...]. On the other hand, Lord Henry states that there is no such thing as influence: 'As for being poisoned by a book, there is no such thing as that. Art has no influence upon action... It is superbly sterile'. (pp.56-57)

Lord Henry does not speak for Wilde here; at least, not for the Wilde who spoke of Pater's *Renaissance* as 'that book which has had such a strange influence over my life' in *De Profundis* (Wilde, 1948, pp.917-18). In fact, Lord Henry's comment seems to contradict his own experience, 'of a book that he had read when he was sixteen, a book which had revealed to him much that he had not known before', and of which he is reminded by Dorian's bewildered response to his initial monologue (p.22).

In one of his letters to the editor of the *St James's Gazette* defending *Dorian Gray*, Wilde suggests that 'Lord Henry Wotton seeks to be merely the spectator of life' (quoted in Lawler, p.339). As he says at Lady Agatha's, 'I am quite content with philosophic contemplation' (p.41). According to Wilde in 'The Critic as Artist',

> Contemplation [...] in the opinion of the highest culture it is the proper occupation of man [...]. It is to do nothing that the elect exist. Action is limited and relative. Unlimited and absolute is the vision of him who sits at ease and watches, who walks in loneliness and dreams.[25]

For 'the spectator of life', the lives of those he watches like Dorian are not of intrinsic value. Their value lies simply in the pleasurable spectacle they provide:

> It was delightful to watch him. With his beautiful face, and his beautiful soul, he was a thing to wonder at. It was no matter how it all ended, or was destined to end. He was like one of those gracious figures in a pageant or a play. (p.57)

To be the spectator of life is to view life as art, as well as to view art as superior to life. 'I love acting,' Lord Henry tells his two companions as they leave for the theatre. 'It is so

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[25] Oscar Wilde, 'The Critic as Artist', in Richard Ellmann (ed.), *The Artist as Critic: Critical Writings of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 371-408 (p. 381).

much more real than life' (p.77). 'More real' presumably because 'life' refuses to acknowledge its own artifice, something that acting could never deny. 'Your cynicism is simply a pose,' Basil tells Lord Henry, to which he replies, 'Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose I know' (p.8). Lord Henry also loves acting in the sense that he is the consummate actor – on the social stage that is – as well as the spectator. His powerful performance at Lady Agatha's leaves Dorian transfixed: 'Dorian Gray never took his gaze off him, but sat like one under a spell' (p.42). Instead of going to see Basil as promised, Dorian asks to accompany Lord Henry to the park.

### 3.3. Sibyl Vane

The way in which Lord Henry views Dorian as 'one of those gracious figures in a pageant or a play', is replicated by Sibyl Vane: 'She regarded me merely as a person in a play,' says Dorian of their initial introduction backstage (p.53). Similarly, when her brother swears to kill Dorian should he wrong her, she compares him to 'one of the heroes of those silly melodramas mother used to be so fond of acting in' (p.67). It is almost as if Wilde cannot quite take his own revenge plot seriously and suggests how generically self-conscious the novel is. As for Mrs Vane herself with her 'false theatrical gestures', she behaves as if she was still on stage in one of those 'silly melodramas', at one point 'looking up to the ceiling in search of an imaginary gallery' (p.61, p.63). When James repeats his oath of revenge, 'The exaggerated folly of the threat [...] made life seem more vivid to her' (p.69). Of course, the way in which Sibyl regards Dorian as a dramatic character (which is how he will come to view her, the Sibyl who commits suicide), is simply a reflection upon her naivety by way of contrast to Lord Henry: 'She knows nothing of life' (p.53). She is not

unlike the childlike Dorian of the beginning of the novel: 'There is something of a child about her,' Dorian tells Lord Henry (p.53).

'I thought you must have some curious romance on hand', says Lord Henry with reference to Dorian's recent absenteeism. 'You have; but it is not quite what I expected' (p.54). The implication is that Lord Henry expected Dorian to explore same sex desire rather than fall in love with an actress. His childlike perception of Sibyl divests her of her sexuality – she is less woman than child. Moreover, her art sets her apart from women more generally. As he tells Lord Henry,

> 'Ordinary women never appeal to one's imagination. They are limited to their century. No glamour ever transfigures them. One knows their minds as easily as one knows their bonnets. One can always find them. There is no mystery in any of them. [...] But an actress!' (p.51)

Lord Henry's influence is clearly detectable in Dorian's newfound misogyny. Her art elevates her above 'ordinary women' but makes her less womanly. At the same time, Sibyl is only important to Dorian 'as a person in a play'. He does not fall in love with the 'real' Sibyl – should such a figure exist – but the stage version of Sibyl who plays the role of Shakespeare's various heroines:

> 'To-night she is Imogen [...] and to-morrow night she will be Juliet.'
> 'When is she Sibyl Vane?'
> 'Never.' (p.54)

It would appear that she is Sibyl Vane the night the three men come to see her act and, in the words of Lord Henry, 'she plays Juliet like a wooden doll' to Dorian's hideous embarrassment (p.82). Lord Henry's comment that 'acting [...] is so much more real than life,' is intended to amuse as much as anything, but for Sibyl it has been literally true. As she explains to Dorian following her artificial performance: 'before I knew you, acting was the one reality of my life. It was only in the theatre that I lived. I thought that it was all true'

(p.84). Dorian's confession of love has stripped her of (what she now regards as) the illusion:

> 'To-night, for the first time in my life, I saw through the hollowness, the sham, the silliness of the empty pageant in which I had always played. To-night, for the first time, I became conscious that the Romeo was hideous, and old, and painted [...] and that the words I had to speak were unreal, were not my words, were not what I wanted to say. You had brought me something higher, something of which all art is but a reflection. You had made me understand what love really is. My love! My love! Prince Charming!' (p.84)

Her newfound awareness of the theatre's unreality triggered by Dorian's confession curbs her capacity to act, and her incapacity to act robs her of her attraction for Dorian in turn. When Lord Henry urges Dorian to live life to the full, he ends up in the theatre, a paradox that is resolved when we remember that 'acting [...] is so much more real than life.' The artificial performance is reserved for life not art: 'you have killed my love,' he tells Sibyl (p.84). 'Without your art you are nothing' (p.85). Dorian is in love with her masks. His love dies when they are removed and the authentic self, 'shallow and stupid' in his eyes, is seemingly revealed. He needs to believe in (the illusion of) artificiality.

Instead of discovering his wife in Shakespeare's plays, he finds a 'third-rate actress with a pretty face' (p.85). In disposing of her art, she relinquishes that which distinguishes her from 'ordinary women'. Dorian remains unmoved by the spectacle of Sibyl's distress, which will culminate in her suicide, with Paglia noting that,

> he is merely following the destiny of his type. [...] The beautiful boy straying into the social world is a destroyer, serene in his Apollonian indifference to the suffering of others. [...] In Decadent Late Romantic terms, Dorian has a perfect right to his cruelty, through the Nietzschean privilege conferred by beauty. (p.515)

'There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to love', suggests the narrator, 'Sibyl Vane seemed to him to be absurdly melodramatic'

(p.86). For Dorian, extremes of emotion are engaging when viewed upon the stage and therefore distanced, but embarrassing or alienating when brought face to face with them. For her part, Sibyl's initial reaction is not to take Dorian seriously. Such feelings belong to the stage, not real life: 'You are acting,' she tells him (p.85). In a sense, Dorian misreads Sibyl's final performance (as Dorian's lover) because in practice, she is simply swapping one role for another, as her perception of him as 'Prince Charming' clearly suggests.[26] In fact, this would presuppose the existence of a subject, whereas it is the swapping of roles that brings Sibyl into being in her various incarnations. Sibyl is 'a masquerading performer [...] [except] that there is no self behind the mask'.[27] The identity of Sibyl is not to be understood in terms of 'performance' but as 'performative'. Her surname 'Vane' is indicative both of her fluctuating identity (she is the proverbial weathercock) and of her hollowness ('vain'). In 'The Decay of Lying', Vivian recalls his friendship with 'a woman of very curious exotic beauty' he has met at a reception: 'what interested most in her was not her beauty, but her character, her entire vagueness of character. She seemed to have no personality at all, but simply the possibility of many types' (Wilde, 1968, p.310). Like her, Sybil has no inner core and, as the name 'Sibyl' suggests, is little more than a mouthpiece (in Lord Henry's words, 'a reed through which Shakespeare's music sounded richer and more full of joy' (p.100)).

Dorian's courtship of Sibyl, his thorough confusion of art and life, is faintly ridiculous, but his rejection of her is plainly cruel – as the picture testifies: 'The quivering,

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[26] According to Rachel Bowlby, 'the reality she finds in Dorian is that of a "Prince Charming" who "has not yet revealed his real name. I think it is quite romantic of him"'. It is by making a new fiction of the world outside that Sibyl can come to see the "real" ugliness of her artistic world' (*Shopping with Freud* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 10-11).

[27] 'Butler claims that the Self is a masquerading performer', writes Benhabib, and 'we are now asked to believe that there is no self behind the mask' (quoted in Salih, p. 68).

ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing' (p.88). The sight of his cruel expression in the moral 'mirror' that is the living picture, pricks his conscience, or rather his vanity (there is a suggestion that it is simply the disfigurement of his image, not the cruelty of his actions that disfigurement signifies, that really troubles him), and the following day he decides to make amends. It is too late because Sibyl is dead, though the knowledge of her death does not magnify his regrets; indeed, it is the insubstantial nature of his regrets that concerns him ironically. As he confesses to Lord Henry,

> 'this thing that has happened does not affect me as it should. It seems to me to be simply like a wonderful ending to a wonderful play. It has all the terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy, a tragedy in which I took part, but by which I have not been wounded.' (p.98)

Turning life into art, Dorian's reaction to Sibyl's death is further evidence of Lord Henry's influence, as Basil will point out. Lord Henry explains his perception of her death as theatre as follows:

> 'Sometimes [...] a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthralls us.' (p.98)

This blurring of the boundary between art and life is encapsulated by the word 'tragedy', which refers to the calamity of Sibyl's suicide but also its dramatic implications. As one would expect, his explanation is riddled with paradox: the shift of life into art as we assume the role of spectator hinges upon the fact that those 'artistic elements of beauty [...] are real': but then to propose that 'we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play' is to suggest that life has been art all along. There is no escape from artifice. That 'we are both', the notion that the artistically beautiful tragedy splits the subject in two, is especially

resonant given the novel's double motif. Dorian will become the fascinated observer of his own corruption; indeed, in the spirit of Henry ('We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthralls us'), the novel places greater emphasis upon Dorian's role as 'spectator' (of the self) than as 'actor' or transgressor.

In disposing of her art, Sibyl relinquishes what differentiates her from the majority of women. From Lord Henry's aesthetic point of view, her death re-establishes her unique identity: 'Some one has killed herself for love of you,' Lord Henry tells Dorian. 'Ordinary women always console themselves' (p.99). Her suicide compensates for her wooden performance as Juliet; she finally achieves that tragic stature originally denied her: 'you must think of that lonely death in the tawdry dressing-room simply as a strange lurid fragment from some Jacobean tragedy,' he continues (p.100). 'The girl never really lived, and so she never really died. [...] Mourn for Ophelia, [...] Cordelia [...]. The daughter of Brabantio [...]. But don't waste your tears over Sibyl Vane. She was less real than they are' (p.100). Lord Henry is right to the extent that her names position her outside the social realism of the other characters.[28]

### 3.4. Dorian Gray

Wilde describes Dorian's reaction to the finished picture as follows:

> When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. He stood there motionless and in wonder [...]. The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. (p.27)

[28] According to Isobel Murray, 'to treat life as art may or may not be bad, but to treat death as Lord Henry encourages Dorian to do is demonstrably evil' ('Introduction', in Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, ed. by Isobel Murray (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xiv).

It is a similar moment of self-recognition to the one in *Frankenstein*, when the creature views himself in the pool and the sight of his hideous reflection consolidates a monstrous sense of self, only here the sight of his 'wonderfully handsome' image consolidates a sense of self as beautiful for Dorian. The paradox is that the construction of identity in either case rests upon the division of the subject in a visual self-encounter. Their newfound sense of self rests upon an image, as well as an identification of the aesthetic quality of that image.

The creature's acquisition of identity is based upon his own image: he recognises his reflection in the neutral surface of the pool, though his gaze is already culturally attuned, which is why he views himself as 'the monster' (p. 90). In the case of Dorian, however, this acquisition is based upon an image that both is and is not his own. On the one hand, the image is not a reflection but has been made by Basil. Elisabeth Bronfen comments, 'By definition, portraits cannot be seen independently of their artist's signature, and in some sense also represent him'.[29] According to Basil at the beginning of the novel, 'every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter' (p.9). Nonetheless, the point here is that acquisition of identity based upon an image made by Basil makes him partly the artist's creation. His apparent recognition of himself for the first time is an error, in the sense that the image is not his own but is how Basil sees him; in fact, if Basil's fears about putting too much of himself into the portrait are true, Dorian recognises himself as he is reflected in the adoring gaze of the artist. On the other hand, the text also insists upon the mimetic quality of the picture – 'a wonderful likeness' from Lord Henry's point of view (p.26). In the words of one contemporary review of the novel and in a way that partly accounts for the fascination it exerts over the spectator, the picture almost

[29] Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 114. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

'has the vividness and grace of life itself'.[30] Certainly, following Dorian's wish to swap roles with the portrait, there is a playful confusion as to which is 'the real Dorian', Dorian or the portrait, in a way that hints at the efficacy of the wish. It begins with Basil about to rip up the canvas: Dorian stops him, crying 'It would be murder!' (p.29). Dorian's acquisition of identity rests upon an image that is now felt to be an actual part or extension of himself. Of course, he is being histrionic. The irony, with which this scene is shot through, is that his feeling is correct because of the unknown efficacy of the wish. It appears that no sooner does he acquire an identity than he materially divides. The conversation that follows in the studio continues to confuse the distinction between original and representation, in a way that drolly paves the way in the light of day for the Gothic disclosure of the living picture after Sibyl's death. When Basil chastises Lord Henry for speaking inappropriately before Dorian, he asks, 'Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?' (p.30). In the discussion of Stevenson, we saw how it transpires that Hyde precedes Jekyll. Something similar is suggested by Basil, when he declines the invitation to go to the theatre that night:

> 'I shall stay with the real Dorian,' he said, sadly.
> 'It is the real Dorian?' cried the original of the portrait, strolling across to him.
> 'Am I really like that?'
> 'Yes; you are just like that.' (p.31)

There is a switch of emphasis from the picture's likeness to Dorian, to Dorian's likeness to the picture: from the remarkable lifelike quality of the picture, to the art-like quality of Dorian, such is his beauty.

The image of Dorian entranced by the sight of his own beauty and rendered immobile, reminds the reader of Lord Henry's description of Dorian as Narcissus at the

[30] Julian Hawthorne, 'The Romance of the Impossible', in Lawler, pp. 348-351 (p. 350).

very beginning of the novel. We subsequently learn that Basil has already drawn Dorian as Narcissus: 'you had leant over the still pool of some Greek woodland, and seen in the water's silent silver the marvel of your own face' (p.110). Dorian poses as Narcissus before the novel opens but remains unaware of his own beauty in real life, despite Basil's compliments. When Dorian is introduced, he is fed up with sitting for Basil and is not even interested in owning a life-sized portrait of himself. Nonetheless, the drawing of Dorian as Narcissus proves to be a 'prophetic picture'. Once the portrait passes into his possession, he not only gazes narcissistically but becomes infatuated with his own image, in a way that is suggestive of auto-eroticism and same-sex desire, as well as straightforward egoism. As Dorian sadly reflects following his discovery of the alteration of the picture:

> Once, in boyish mockery of Narcissus, he had kissed, or feigned to kiss, those painted lips that now smiled so cruelly at him. Morning after morning he had sat before the portrait wondering at its beauty, almost enamoured of it, as it seemed to him at times. (p.102)

Once Dorian registers the portrait's capacity to change, it is no longer the equivalent of the pool to Narcissus. It retains the power to fascinate and to provide pleasure by becoming another kind of mirror: 'He would be able to follow his mind into its secret places. This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul' (p.103). The former role of the picture is now taken by the handheld mirror given to him by Lord Henry, 'an oval glass framed in ivory Cupids' that possibly takes its shape from Poe's parasitic oval portrait (p.88). The idea that Dorian becomes besotted with his own image is symbolised by the encircling ivory Cupids. Lord Henry views Dorian as a kind of ivory cupid in part; he comments on Dorian's ivory body at the beginning of the novel and also thinks of him as 'this son of Love and Death' (p.38). It is an appropriate gift from Lord Henry given his general commitment to the

surface of things and especially because of the way in which he draws Dorian's attention to his own beauty in Basil's garden: to his own beauty and to its transitory nature, which he does by linking it to his fleeting youth.

As Dorian continues to gaze at the finished picture for the first time, his initial feeling of pleasure is replaced by one of pain, for the picture has divested Dorian of the innocence of his beauty and consequently made him susceptible to Lord Henry's words. The sight of his image consolidates a sense of self as beautiful that is almost immediately jeopardised, for Dorian gazes at the picture with its eternal youthful beauty and imaginatively juxtaposes it with the image of his own inevitable physical ruin. 'From being an inspiration to art', observes Colin McGinn, 'he will become the ugliness from which art offers escape. The painting has the aesthetic permanence that his mortality denies'.[31] Gazing at the picture, Dorian laments his mutability and the picture's permanence and utters the wish for the transposition of these qualities: 'If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! [...] I would give my soul for that!' (p.28). 'It is the idea of duration – of earthly immortality – that gives such a mysterious interest to our own portraits', writes Nathaniel Hawthorne in 'The Prophetic Pictures' (written 1835).[32] Dorian's jealousy of the picture contrasts with the reaction of Hawthorne's young heroine, Elinor, to a painting of the Virgin Mary:

> 'How singular a thought,' observed Walter Ludlow, 'that this beautiful face has been beautiful for above two hundred years! Oh, if all beauty would endure so well! Do you not envy her, Elinor?'
> 'If Earth were Heaven, I might,' she replied. 'But where all things fade, how miserable to be the one that could not fade!' (p.459)

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[31] Colin McGinn, *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 125. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[32] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Tales and Sketches* (New York, Literary Classics of the United States, 1982), p. 461. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

The fulfilment of the wish bestows the eternal qualities of the picture upon Dorian, converting his features into a living mask of youthful beauty, one which will help to discredit the subsequent reports of his scandalous private life. Dorian presents almost an angelic face to the public, his youthful beauty seemingly indicative of a moral purity that the concealed degenerate portrait belies: for the fulfilment of the wish also bestows Dorian's material existence upon the picture and the physical signs of the immoral or sinful acts that would otherwise be written across his body.

It is rumoured later that 'he has sold himself to the devil for a pretty face', though the efficacy of the wish remains unexplained (p.183). When Dorian first notices that the picture has changed, he searches for a logical reason but soon desists and the absence of a rational explanation generally makes *Dorian Gray* different to the other *fin-de-siècle* Gothic texts under discussion. The following day, we are told how Dorian finds himself in the infancy of the living picture, 'gazing at the portrait with a feeling of almost scientific interest', as he tries to account for the alteration (p.93). One can imagine this is how Lord Henry would view the living picture and Dorian is surprised by his own apparent detachment in hindsight. However, his detachment also collapses with the unspoken thought that the picture has appropriated his soul:

> Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? [...] Or was there some other, more terrible reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing in sickened horror. (p.93)

The numerous subsequent references to the living picture in terms of the soul indicate that the wish physically separates Dorian from his soul: 'His own soul was looking out at him from the canvas'; 'It is the face of my soul' (p.116, p.150). He becomes a body without a

soul, which is given to the picture: in the process of which, he becomes the representation and the picture becomes the original, the central paradox of the novel. Yet the division between Dorian (body) and picture (soul) is less clear-cut than it appears. Certainly, there are other references to Dorian's soul which clearly do not refer to the picture. For example, Lord Henry considers how 'Dorian Gray's soul had turned to this white girl [Sibyl] and bowed in worship before her' (p.57). More interestingly perhaps, after Dorian has murdered Basil, we are told how, 'Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away' (p.179). His transgressions literally cannibalise the picture. In this instance, the memory of Basil's murder, Dorian's guilty conscience, seems to be psychologically destroying him (in other words, 'soul' means 'psyche' or 'mind' here). We shall consider the contentious issue of conscience in more detail shortly, but judging by Dorian's reaction to the murder, it would appear that the wish frees him from moral restraint by removing the visible consequences from his features, but it does not displace his soul (the moral self or conscience), although it functions erratically to say the least. Dorian seems to have shrugged off the murder by the end of the novel:

> Nor, indeed, was it the death of Basil Hallward that weighed most upon his mind. It was the living death of his own soul that troubled him. Basil has painted the portrait that had marred his life. He could not forgive him that. (p.210)

He is more worried by the picture's failure to recognise what he perceives to be his new found rectitude.

When Dorian finally returns home after the disastrous evening at the theatre and his rejection of Sibyl, he notices for the first time that the picture has changed: there is 'a touch of cruelty in the mouth' (p.87). He pauses to reflect upon his behaviour but emboldened by

what Lord Henry has told him about women, he contemptuously puts Sibyl out of his mind. However, the picture continues to trouble him as it returns his gaze:

> it was watching him, with its beautiful marred face and its cruel smile. Its bright hair gleamed in the early sunlight. Its blue eyes met his own. A sense of infinite pity, not for himself, but for the painted image of himself, came over him. It had altered already and would alter more. Its gold would wither into grey. Its red and white roses would die. For every sin that he committed, a stain would fleck and wreck its fairness. But he would not sin. The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visible emblem of conscience. He would resist temptation. (p.89)

Dorian's resolution to be good is motivated by his sympathy for his portrait rather than for Sibyl at this point and is an extension of his narcissism. He might not be able to prevent it from aging, but he can stop it from being desecrated by the physical consequences of his wrongdoing if he behaves well. 'I want to be good,' he tells Lord Henry. 'I can't bear the idea of my soul being hideous' (p.94).

The issue of conscience has proved a source of contention ever since the novel's original publication in *Lippincott's*. The *Daily Chronicle* attacked Dorian's 'cool, calculating, conscienceless character' (quoted in Lawler, p.344). Wilde responded that:

> On the contrary, he is extremely impulsive, absurdly romantic, and is haunted all through his life by an exaggerated sense of conscience which mars his pleasures for him and warns him that youth and enjoyment are not everything in the world. It is finally to get rid of conscience that had dogged his steps from year to year that he destroys the picture; and thus in his attempt to kill conscience Dorian Gray kills himself. (quoted in Lawler, p.345)

According to Wilde, the picture is conscience, the displacement of which makes Dorian more conscious of it. He is 'haunted' by conscience – 'That spectre in my path' according to the epigraph of Edgar Allan Poe's *William Wilson* (1849), a short story which Wilde

could also be describing here.[33] Conscience literally dogs William Wilson from Eton to Oxford, then across the capitals of Europe, in the form of his omnipresent and omnipotent double, who impossibly turns up whenever he is about to transgress. Presumably, it is the thought or the memory of the (immobile) picture that haunts Dorian; in fact, he comes to haunt the picture. Some modern critics have dismissed Wilde's defence of Dorian's character in terms of conscience outright. For example, Paglia rejects the idea that conscience is of any thematic importance at all:

> No great work of Romantic imagination has anything to do with conscience. *Dorian Gray* is a web of Romantic fascination, a force field of Apollonian and daemonic charisma, heir to *Christabel* in its dark vision of sex and power. We need no moral axioms to interpret it. Dorian commits certain forbidden acts and is punished for them. But he operates under ritual rather than ethical proscriptions. (p.527)

Wilde's defence of Dorian should certainly be treated with caution. Sometimes it would appear to be boredom not conscience that 'warns him that youth and enjoyment are not everything'. Furthermore, Dorian quickly reverses his decision to 'resist temptation' when he discovers that Sibyl is dead, ironically, and even if he is haunted by his conscience, it hardly appears to affect his behaviour (it spoils his pleasures according to Wilde, but it does not prevent him from pursuing them). Yet Paglia is overly dismissive. The references to it alone suggest that *Dorian Gray* has 'something' to do with conscience and because this is both a question of identity and how Dorian views the portrait (one of the gaze), it cannot be ignored.

Wilde actually mocks the idea of conscience through Lord Henry. When Basil tells Lord Henry of his attempt to flee the room upon first seeing Dorian, the artist admits that he

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[33] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Complete Tales and Poems* (London: Penguin, 1982), p. 626. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

was prompted by cowardice rather than conscience. Lord Henry pricks his self-satisfied candour by conflating the two: 'Conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm. That is all' (p.10). More significantly perhaps, he tells Dorian at one point that 'nothing makes one so vain as being told that one is a sinner. Conscience makes egotists of us all' (p.99). Comments like these from Lord Henry may well have contributed to the hostile reaction to the original *Dorian Gray*. According to the *Daily Chronicle*:

> There is not a single good and holy impulse of human nature, scarcely a fine feeling or instinct that civilization, art, and religion have developed throughout the ages as part of the barriers between Humanity and Animalism that is not held up to ridicule and contempt. (quoted in Lawler, p.343)

From Lord Henry's perspective, the degenerate picture (which tells Dorian that he is a sinner in no uncertain terms) does not discipline his egotism or his vanity but actually feeds it. Conscience is also powerless to affect one's actions. To have a moral sense is not the same as being able to act upon it: according to Lord Henry, 'Good resolutions are useless attempts to interfere with scientific laws. Their origin is pure vanity. The result is absolutely *nil*' (p.97).[34] Clearly, there is a tension between the idea that 'scientific laws' dictate behaviour, which makes moral categories redundant, and the fact that picture makes visible morally evil acts. Nonetheless, Lord Henry is borne out by Dorian's failure to reverse the degeneration of the picture, 'to expel every sign of evil passion', when he decides not to corrupt Hetty: 'The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before' (p.211). Dorian is predisposed to behave in an 'evil' way and there is nothing he can do to change it, just like Jekyll after he has taken the drug for the first time.

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[34] See *The Artist as Critic*, pp. 382-83.

The childlike Dorian has no idea how badly he has treated Sibyl at first, but the altered picture slowly changes that. The following day he reflects that, 'It had made him conscious how unjust, how cruel, he had been', and he writes an extravagant love letter to her in order to make amends (p.93). The picture activates his previously dormant conscience by punishing his beautiful image:

> the portrait [...] would be a guide to him through life, would be to him what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all. There were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep. But here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls. (p.93)

The 'symbol' or 'sign' has only been swapped from Dorian to the picture, the principle of inscription having been reversed with the efficacy of the wish. Yet Dorian thinks that the living picture is more powerful than the conventional operation of conscience because it cannot be so easily ignored or suppressed. It heightens moral self-consciousness by projecting the consequences onto the portrait, which would partly explain his subsequent decision to conceal it having committed himself to a life of pleasure.

> Beneath the purple pall, the faced painted on the canvas would grow bestial, sodden, and unclean. What did it matter? No one could see it. Why should he watch the corruption of his own soul? He kept his youth -- that was enough. (p.118)

When Wilde writes that Dorian 'is haunted [...] by an exaggerated sense of conscience' then, 'exaggerated' refers to the way the picture puts the consequences of his transgressions on display (sin is writ large as it were); an exaggeration that is detectable in the perceived contrast between Basil's shallow reproaches following the death of Sibyl and those of the picture which returns his gaze: 'His own soul was looking out at him from the canvas and calling him to judgement' (p.116).

The death of Sibyl sees Dorian's moral resolve crumble, though the suspicion is that it would have crumbled regardless; something that is further suggested by the sense of his lack of agency and that he is not in control of his own destiny:

> He felt that the time had really come for making his choice. Or had his choice already been made? Yes, life, had decided that for him – life, and his infinite curiosity about life. Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins – he was to have all these things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all. (p.102)

Does Dorian deceive himself on the issue of choice? The thought that he has not chosen to be wicked might be an attempt to absolve himself from moral responsibility, although it would still suggest that his conscience is at work, to the extent that it needs to be circumvented. Either way, the decision sees his narcissistic desire to preserve his beautiful image overpowered. As he gazes at the picture, 'A feeling of pain crept over him as he thought of the desecration that was in store for the fair face on the canvas' (p.102). He shudders at the idea that the living picture represents an endless process of degeneration:

> What the worm was to the corpse, his sins would be to the canvas. They would mar its beauty, and eat away its grace. They would defile it, and make it shameful. And yet the thing would still live on. It would always be alive. (p.115)

Yet the gaze is ambivalent. Dorian also conceives of the picture as a potential source of viewing pleasure, on account of its ability to 'be to him the most magical of mirrors'.

The way in which Dorian swiftly succumbs to temptation logically points to the superficial nature of his initial resolution to resist it, though the opposite may be true. When he discovers that Sibyl has committed suicide, he tells Lord Henry that 'I must sow poppies in my garden' in order to numb the sense of guilt (p.98). Seed suggests that his subsequent 'cultivation of hedonism is introduced as a means of stifling his remorse':

> Although Wilde declared that the novel's moral was that 'all excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its own punishment', we never see Dorian whole-

> heartedly indulging in excess for its own sake. We are constantly aware rather of his efforts to stifle his moral sense.[35] (p.50)

In which case, it is his conscience that drives his pleasure-seeking, paradoxically. Chapter XI describes Dorian's descent into hedonism, including his collection of valuable objects. With few thoughts as to the consequences for the picture, he seems to indulge in excess for its own sake to begin with: 'That curiosity about life which Lord Henry has first stirred in him [...] seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them' (p.124). However, having described Dorian's collection of perfumes, jewels, tapestries and embroideries, Wilde suggests that 'everything that he collected in his lovely house, were to him means of forgetfulness, modes by which he could escape, for a season, from the fear that seemed to him at times to be almost too great to be borne' (p.134). Dorian concentrates on his valuable material objects in order to suppress the memory of the living picture which watches and judges him, and degenerates accordingly, though there is no actual mention of Sibyl here. Ultimately, it is a futile activity. The oppressive thought of the picture is supplanted by his hatred of being separated from it. He discontinues his seasons abroad and departs abruptly from his social gatherings at Selby Royal, also driven by the fear of exposure, that the picture will be overlooked.

'I must sow poppies in my garden,' says Dorian after Sibyl's death. He really turns to opium after he has murdered Basil. This supports the idea that conscience working through memory drives transgression:

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[35] Seed and Paglia offer pleasingly contradictory arguments from the point of view of the preface: 'When critics disagree the artist is in accord with himself' (Wilde, p. xxiv).

> 'To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul.' Yes, that was the secret. He had often tried it, and would try it again now. There were opium-dens, where one could buy oblivion, dens of horror where the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new. (p.176)

The opium den has its own terrible charm for Dorian in its hellish exoticism. The clientele seem hardly human, 'grotesque things' arranged in 'fantastic postures', an assemblage of seemingly agonised body parts, echoing Lord Henry's description of Dorian. 'The twisted limbs, the gaping mouths, the staring lustreless, eyes, fascinated him', although the sight is not enough to counteract his self-consciousness as memory gnaws away at him (p.179). His guilty conscience even makes him see Basil's eyes looking at him. Indeed, when he subsequently spots James Vane's face peering at him through the window at Selby – like the picture, a framed face that calls him to judgement, for James has sworn to avenge his sister's death – he wonders whether this too is a guilt-driven misapprehension:

> if it had been merely an illusion, how terrible it was to think that conscience could raise such fearful phantoms, and give them visible form, and make them move before one! What sort of life would be his if, day and night, shadows of his crime were to peer at him from silent corners, to mock him from secret places, to whisper in his ear as he sat at the feast, to wake him with icy fingers as he lay asleep! (pp.191-2)

There are strong echoes of *William Wilson* here, as elsewhere. William's double appears when he is engaged in an illicit activity and speaks in 'a very low whisper' in order to frustrate his misconduct (p.631). The picture does not have this effect on Dorian. In fact, the impulse to murder Basil not only seems to have been suggested to him by the picture, but 'whispered into his ear by those grinning lips' (p.151). What was 'the visible emblem of conscience' now seems to be complicit in this most heinous of crimes.

### 3.5. *William Wilson* and 'The Oval Portrait'

The theme of the duality of identity is central to *William Wilson*, something that is suggested by the immediate disclosure from the narrator that 'William Wilson' is not actually his real name, but 'a fictitious title not very dissimilar to the real', adopted on account of his infamy (p.629). William's retrospective narrative starts at school. The theme of duality is introduced through the observant young William. He cannot reconcile the fact that the pastor of the village church is also the principal of the school, on account of the contrary facial expressions and clothes of these two figures:

> This reverend man, with countenance so demurely benign, with robes so glossy and so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid and so vast, – could this be he who, of late, with sour visage, and in snuffy habiliments, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian Laws of the academy? (p.627)

William dominates his fellow pupils with one exception and he has exactly the same name as himself, an early sign that William's identity is fractured. The blurring of the body with clothes in the quotation above, the suggestion that faces can just as easily be swapped, indicates that identity is performative – or a performance if we think there is an 'actor' who is in control of the changes. This is how William views his namesake. He plays the role of William: 'and most admirably did he play his part. My dress it was an easy matter to copy, my gait and general manner were without difficulty, appropriated' (p.632). William will not describe the extent to which 'this most exquisite portraiture harassed me', but the threat seems to relate to the fear of the narrator's self being transformed into the other, to be a representation not an original: the unspoken thought behind Dorian's gaze of horror discussed previously (p.632).

At one point, William sneaks into his double's bedroom with the intention of playing a spiteful prank, but the sight of his sleeping face is so horrifying, that he flees from school for good:

> Were these – *these* the lineaments of William Wilson? I saw, indeed, that they were his, but I shook as if with a fit of the ague, in fancying they were not. What *was* there about them to confound me in this manner? I gazed; – while my brain reeled with a multitude of incoherent thoughts. Not thus he appeared – assuredly not *thus* – in the vivacity of his waking hours. The same name! The same contour of person! The same day of arrival at the academy! And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner! Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that *what I now saw* was the result, merely of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation? (p.634)

We cannot be sure what William sees because the face is never described. The description illustrates perfectly the general tension in the story between narrative retrospection and the insistent immediacy of the experience described. His namesake remains featureless like Hyde, a blank at the centre of the narrative. The implication is that his namesake bears his own features. They remain hidden up until the final encounter that takes places at a masquerade, an appropriate location given the play upon identity thus far, although it is also ironic that a masked ball should provide the setting for the uncovering of identity, the solution to its riddle. William confronts his masked double, whose whisper interrupts an attempted sexual transgression, drags him into a side room and stabs him in a one-sided duel. Moments later, he notices a mirror at the end of the room in which sees his own wounded image. The implication is that he has stabbed himself as William and his double collapse into one, but it is immediately undercut by the narrator, who dismisses the sight of the mirror as a misapprehension: 'It was my antagonist – it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of his dissolution' (p.641). Only, William's dying antagonist has removed his mask to reveal features that are identical to his own. No sooner is the double

restored than they appear to collapse together again when his namesake speaks: 'I could have fancied that I myself was speaking', and in the very last lines the terms of address reverse: 'You have conquered, and I yield. Yet henceforward art thou also dead – dead to the World, to Heaven, and to Hope! In me didst thou exist – and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself' (p.641). In Wilde's words, it is finally to get rid of conscience that has dogged his steps that William destroys his namesake; and thus in his attempt to kill conscience he kills himself. As critics have noted, Wilde clearly found the conclusion conducive: Dorian stabs the picture but is subsequently found with a knife in his heart. The idea of the restoration of the picture upon the death of the model draws upon another story by Poe, 'The Oval Portrait' (1845), which shall be considered shortly.

The lifelike property of Basil's picture anticipates this actual transformation into a living artefact, qualities which link the novel to earlier magic picture stories.[36] Such is the skill of the unnamed artist in 'The Prophetic Pictures' that:

> Some deemed it an offence against the Mosaic law, and even a presumptuous mockery of the Creator, to bring into existence such lively images of his creatures. Others, frightened at the art which could raise phantoms at will, and keep the form of the dead among the living, were inclined to consider the painter as a magician. (p.458)

The artist is a kind of Frankenstein in his apparent usurping of God's role and transgression of the boundary between life and death. Furthermore, such is his capacity to capture in his portraits the essence of the sitters, that 'to speak paradoxically, the originals hardly resembled themselves so strikingly as the portraits did' (p.459). There is a similar kind of

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[36] For a discussion of the haunted portrait motif, see Theodore Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconology* (Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 78-148, and Kerry Powell, 'Tom, Dick, and Dorian Gray: Magic-Picture Mania in Late Victorian Fiction', *Philological Quarterly*, 62 (1983), pp. 147-170.

slippage to the one identified before in the opening scenes of *Dorian Gray*, as the distinction between human and representation is blurred.

'I had found the spell of the picture in an absolute *lifelikeness* of expression', recalls the narrator of Poe's 'The Oval Portrait', 'which, at first startling, finally confounded, subdued and appalled me' (p.291). In *Gothic*, Botting describes 'The Oval Portrait' as 'a very short story self-consciously using conventional Gothic devices like the old castle, the life-like portrait and discovered manuscript' (p.122). In *Disenchanted Images* (1977), Theodore Ziolkowski observes how it also 'departs from the Gothic tradition: the portrait does not step down from its frame or otherwise seem to become animate'.[37] The badly injured narrator has sought refuge in the small room of an isolated turret in a mountain castle. It is amongst other things furnished with a number of paintings in which he becomes utterly absorbed in his 'incipient delirium', only supplementing their contemplation with reading from the accompanying catalogue. But when he moves the candelabrum, a previously concealed picture becomes visible, the sight of which shocks him out of his trance-like state:

> It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood. I glanced at the painting hurriedly, and then closed my eyes. Why I did this was not at first apparent even to my own perception. But while my lids remained thus shut, I ran over in mind my reason for so shutting them. It was an impulsive moment to gain time for thought – to make sure that my vision had not deceived me – to calm and subdue my fancy for a more sober and more certain gaze. In a very few moments I again looked fixedly at the painting. (p.291)

The startling sight of the seemingly living portrait, subsequently rationalised as lifelike, cuts short the gaze of the narrator. His detachment also collapses as the boundaries between

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[37] Theodore Ziolkowski, *Disenchanted Images: A Literary Iconology* (Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 123. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

art and life, and life and death, are compromised.[38] The narrator closes his eyes, temporarily hiding the portrait from view, partly to clarify what he has seen, paradoxically. Unsurprisingly from Poe, the trustworthiness of his narrator's vision is a vexed issue given his 'incipient delirium'; indeed, which may no longer be embryonic since he has been gazing and reading for so long, and what with its suggestion of hallucination. The narrator also closes his eyes to compose himself, so that he can recover his visual mastery by subsequently fixing the portrait in his gaze.[39] He endeavours to delimit the disturbing power of the portrait by concentrating on its artistic qualities and by locating the initial source of shock. Having dismissed the possibility that he mistook the portrait for a real face because the fact of its being an artwork was apparent to his initial glance, he eventually locates the cause in its 'absolute *lifelikeness*' (p.291). It is as close as possible to being life, without actually being life. The fact of its '*likeness*' is what makes it rival life but which is also the condition of its difference. According to Bronfen, 'Judging and admiring the portrait engenders a semantic binding of its previously so disturbing unbound, ambivalent and indeterminate quality', not unlike Prendick's identification of 'the mark of the beast' in *Moreau* (p.116). This binding provides little comfort to the 'subdued' and 'appalled' narrator, who repositions the candelabrum in order to hide the portrait from view once more and take up the catalogue instead, but rather than confirm the portrait's lifelike virtues, the accompanying story describes how the parasitic portrait appears to come to life at the expense of her death when the artist paints his wife.

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[38] 'The glance subverted the security and superiority of the spectator's stance, destabilised him in such a way as to revel the literality of his own mortality' (Bronfen, p. 116).

[39] Poe edits the portrait's returned gaze out of 'Life in Death' (1842) before republishing it as 'The Oval Portrait'. For a brief discussion of the major differences between 'Life in Death' and 'The Oval Portrait', see James Twitchell, 'Poe's "The Oval Portrait" and the Vampire Motif', *Studies in Short Fiction* 14 (1977), pp. 387-393 (pp. 392-393). Also see Paula Kot, 'Painful Erasures: Excising the Wild Eye from "The Oval Portrait"', *Poe Studies* 28 1-2 (1995), pp. 1-6.

The artist already has 'a bride in Art' and his wife consequently regards 'Art' as 'her rival'. Poe manifestly sexualises the artistic process. The artist consummates his marriage to art by painting his wife. He takes 'a fervid and burning pleasure in his task' and becomes 'wild with the ardour of his work' as the process nears its climax (p.292). At the same time, he remains oblivious to the fact that his wife is evidently wasting away; the irony is that those who see the work in progress attribute its astonishing resemblance to his love for her, as well as to his own powers. The gaze of the artist, his desire to capture her likeness, involves an inability or refusal to acknowledge the evidence of his own eyes. He almost stops looking at her altogether as the portrait nears completion, now oblivious to the fact 'that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sate behind him' (p.292) – a kind of fleshly or vampiric painting as the portrait appears to consume the life of the model: 'Art, like Nature, has her monsters' (Wilde, p.130).

The painting of the portrait does not appear to consume Dorian, who is objectified but not literally drained of life (if anything the model threatens to figuratively drain the artist, hence Basil's fear of being 'absorbed'), though Wilde would have found the end of the account useful for his own conclusion in which Dorian dies and the portrait is restored. The artist gazes at the finished portrait and cries out 'This is indeed *Life* itself!', and he turns to his wife to discover that she is dead (p.292). As with *Jekyll and Hyde*, there is no return from the inset narrative and we are not given the response of the reading narrator, whose initial reaction of shock to the (seemingly) living portrait is duplicated by the artist. Artistic creation then comes at the expense of the life of the model; or, to put it another way, the price of artistic immortality is death, an extension of the vampire motif. Like *Frankenstein*, 'The Oval Portrait' also 'presents the dangerous consequences of masculine

creation', a central preoccupation of *fin-de-siècle* Gothic as has been seen with regards to *Moreau* and *Jekyll and Hyde* (Bronfen, p.112). Both 'The Prophetic Pictures' and 'The Oval Portrait' feature artists who put their art above human life. Dorian accuses Basil of valuing his art above his friends, when Lord Henry undermines the gravity of the moment of the wish, with a joke about the artist's displeasure should the wish come true and his masterpiece be despoiled: but it is the unethical analyst Lord Henry and especially Dorian, who put their 'art' above human life. Dorian treats life as art ('Life has been your art' says Lord Henry at the end of the novel) and it involves the ruin of the lives of numerous men and women, not to mention the murder of Basil (p.207).

'It is no accident that stories concerning the portrait as *anima* begin just around this time [the 1830s]', observes Ziolkowski, 'The daguerreotype was perfected in 1839, and soon thereafter the art of photography began to develop rapidly' (p.119). The optical phenomena depicted in the mid-nineteenth century magic picture story can be understood in the context of the invention of photography – 'the new optical miracle'.[40] As Martin Jay notes in his discussion of the intellectual debate in France surrounding this invention, 'the commonplace view of photography ever since its inception [...] is that it records a moment of reality as it actually appeared. Daguerre's camera was immediately called a "mirror" of the world' (p.126).[41] In other words, the artist of the magic picture story is credited with the kind of capabilities that were being attributed to the camera (in an exaggerated or supernatural form); hence, Tom Gunning reads 'The Oval Portrait' as 'a fable of the pursuit

[40] Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (London: University of California Press, 1994), p. 125. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[41] The camera was one of a number of inventions, 'from Daguerre's Diorama to Edison's first Kinetophonograph' that were understood to be taking 'another step toward the "re-creation" of reality, toward a "perfect illusion" of the perceptual world' (Noel Burch quoted in Jay, p. 127).

of realist representation'.[42] Basil's lifelike picture of Dorian is something of an anomaly, given Wilde's vociferous censure of what Vivian calls 'the prison-house of realism' in 'The Decay of Lying':

> No doubt there will always be critics who [...] quote that hackneyed passage about Art holding the mirror up to Nature, forgetting that this unfortunate aphorism is deliberately said by Hamlet in order to convince the bystanders of his absolute insanity in all art-matters.[43]

The picture transgresses Wilde's own aesthetic code. 'Art deals with appearances', Wilde writes in a book review published in 1889, 'and the eye of the man who looks at Nature, the vision in fact of the artist, is far more important to us than what he looks at.'[44]

However, we can read *Dorian Gray* in the light of late nineteenth century developments in the application of photography.[45] 'By the end of the nineteenth century, photography was being used to classify people into 'types', illustrating and extending the Victorian sciences of phrenology and physiognomy', notes Michelle Henning:

> the desire to classify bodies according to visual appearance is justified by the belief that the surface reveals hidden depths; in other words, that the outer surfaces of the body could be read as a series of signs or codes revealing or expressing inner character'.[46]

Fusing biology with 'law', Wilde makes bodily stigmata indicative of transgression in the novel. When Basil comes to confront Dorian with the scandalous rumours circulating about

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[42] Tom Gunning, ''Animated Pictures': Tales of the Cinema's Forgotten Future, After 100 Years of Film', in *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. by Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeanne M. Przyblyski (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 100-113 (p. 109).

[43] Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying', in *The Artist as Critic* (see Ellmann, above), pp. 290-320 (pp. 305-306).

[44] *The Artist as Critic*, p. 127. 'Nature is no great mother who has borne us,' argues Vivian in 'The Decay of Lying'. 'She is our creation. It in our brain that she quickens to life. Things are because we see them' (*The Artist as Critic*, p. 312).

[45] For a summary of the late-nineteenth-century use of photography, see Andrew Barry, 'Reporting and Visualising', in *Visual Culture*, ed. by Chris Jenks (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 52.

[46] Michelle Henning, 'The Subject as Object: Photography and the Human Body', in *Photography: A Critical Introduction (Third Edition)*, ed. by Liz Wells (London and New York: Routledge, 1996, 2004), p. 164. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

his private life, he is disarmed by the sight of his angelic features on account of the fact that:

> 'Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even.' (p.143)

The idea is borne out by the picture. Earlier, Wilde has described how Dorian would:

> stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. (p.124)

It is one of those rare moments in the novel when we actually see Dorian enjoying himself. Here, it is at the expense of his displaced ruin and his pleasure seems tinged with something like necrophilia or a relish of disease. He subjects the picture to a kind of perverse aesthetic scrutiny. It is noteworthy how Dorian accords similar status to the physical effects of aging, as to the after-effects of acts of transgression. The bodily signs of transgression indicate the operation of some kind of divine or moral law – judgement, in effect. In *Moreau*, the Law slips between religious, moral and legal significations (the Leopard Man is described as 'criminal' and 'sinner', for example). Wilde's repeated emphasis upon 'sin' suggests that the picture operates according to religious law though a similar slippage is implied; that is to say, we can read the degenerate image in terms of Dorian's sinful, immoral or illegal actions. Aging is a natural process, wholly separate from the issue of behaviour and morality; there is no law being broken and yet the body it would seem is similarly

punished. It is Lord Henry who first articulates the idea of the ghastliness of the aging process:

> 'The pulse of joy that beats in us at twenty, becomes sluggish. Our limbs fail, our senses rot. We degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield. Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!' (p.25)

Lord Henry encourages Dorian to live life to the full before his beauty fades, but the message is contradictory in the sense that living life to the full will destroy his beauty prematurely. The efficacy of the wish means that he destroys the beauty of his soul instead. According to McGinn,

> there is a glaring irony in Dorian's story: by pursuing beauty alone, spurning all moral restraint, he ends up making the very core of his being as hideous as anything could be. The outward beauty of his life is purchased at the cost of extreme ugliness. By making sin into art he makes his soul into a gargoyle – the very antithesis of the beautiful. That is to say: his aesthetic project is actually *self-refuting* or *self-undermining*.[47] (p.137)

There is something perverse perhaps in turning youth into an ideal given its transience. That is to say, it is a tragic or doomed ideal; hence, the effort to reverse this in *Dorian Gray*, though Dorian does not cut an admirable or enviable figure in his permanent state of youth, and hardly seems to enjoy the license his unique situation affords.

Shortly after Dorian has noticed the initial change to the picture, he hopes that in the future he will 'see the change taking place before his very eyes, shuddering as he hoped it' (p.101): 'seared' and 'crawled' in the description above suggest that the body is visibly decaying. Dorian's hope to witness the actual alteration suggests that he does not necessarily transgress for its own sake, or for pleasure. We subsequently learn how the

[47] Murray also reads the novel as a critique of aestheticism in her introduction to the novel (p. xvi). As does Richard Ellmann: '*Dorian Gray* is the novel *par excellence*, not in espousing the doctrine, but in exhibiting its dangers' (*Oscar Wilde* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 297).

knowledge of the picture locked in the schoolroom subsequently becomes a burden to Dorian:

> For weeks he would not go there, and would forget the hideous painted thing, and get back his light heart, his wonderful joyousness, his passionate absorption in mere existence. Then, suddenly, some night he would creep out of the house, go down to dreadful places near Blue Gate Fields, and stay there, day after day, until he was driven away. On his return he would sit in front of the picture, sometimes loathing it and himself, but filled, at other times, with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin, and smiling with secret pleasure, at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own. (p.135)

The ambivalence of Dorian's gaze suggests a partial shift from his posture of smiling narcissism above, though Lord Henry would most likely say that 'loathing' and 'pride' are not opposites but twins; indeed, that 'pride' is morally preferable to 'loathing' given the latter's covert egotism. Dorian is compelled to gaze at the living picture after he has transgressed, so much so that it is as if he transgresses in order to make the picture change, in order that he can view the change. Transgression is less important than the witnessing of its after-effect, the physical punishment inflicted upon the body, which again points to Dorian's masochism: or rather the point is that the sight of the degenerate picture intensifies his narcissistic joy, as the image of Dorian pleasurably alternating his gaze between the mirror and the picture suggests. His narcissism drives his transgressions because the more hideous the picture becomes, the greater the pleasure he takes in his own mask of youthful beauty.

Henning goes on to suggest that,

> physiognomy and phrenology were also deployed as a means of social control via photography. Because is shows only surfaces, photography is ideally suited to physiognomic and phrenological interpretation, and it became part of an increasingly professionalized and systematic police force. (pp.164-5)

In other words, we can read the living picture as a mug shot of sorts; one that evolves, or rather devolves, on account of its added depth – 'It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away' (p.150). The deterioration of the picture, signs of moral – and perhaps sexual – disease, materially testifies to Dorian's transgressions, a kind of oblique representation through symptom.[48] According to Utterson, Hyde's detestable face is inscribed with 'Satan's signature' but there is an important difference between the two doubles when it comes to the issue of inscription (p.42). As was considered in the chapter on Stevenson, Hyde escapes the economy of the gaze because he is somehow beyond representation ('I can't describe him,' says Enfield): the picture is literally a monstrous representation (p.36). Presumably, Hyde could be photographed, though Stevenson is careful to point out when he is wanted for murder that there are no photographs in existence to facilitate his capture.

Dorian's transgressions are dreadful enough to give the picture 'the face of a satyr' from Basil's point of view (p.150). The image of the satyr, associated with sensuality or lust, intimates that they are sexual in kind, though they remain obscure. According to Alan Sinfield:

> Dorian is represented (in chapter 11) as repeating the debaucheries of Huysman's protagonist in *Against Nature*, but there is no clear reference to anything that corresponds to the latter's same-sex experiences. He is accused of ruining the reputations of numerous women and of having corrupted young men, but the vice of one these is specified as taking 'his wife from the streets', and of another as fraud. What Wilde had wanted, he said, was 'to surround Dorian Gray with an atmosphere of moral corruption. Otherwise the story would have no meaning and the plot no issue. To keep this atmosphere vague and

[48] For a discussion of the use of the physical imagery of syphilis in *Dorian Gray* and *fin-de-siècle* Gothic more generally, see Elaine Showalter, 'Syphilis, Sexuality, and the Fiction of the *Fin de Siècle*', in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions* (see Heath, above), pp. 166-183.

> indeterminate and wonderful was the aim.' Of course, that does not rule out same-sex passion, but neither does it make possible a secure labelling of Dorian's vice. [49]

Hostile reviews of the magazine version like that published in the *Scots Observer*, with its coded reference to the Cleveland Street scandal ('[Wilde] can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph-boys'), found little difficulty in getting a fix on Dorian's homoerotic vices, no doubt facilitated by the depiction of the relations between the three males, especially Basil's feelings for Dorian, which were subsequently toned down for the novel but which would come back to haunt Wilde, for example, at the libel trial of Queensbury (Lawler, p.346).[50] When the story was republished, the additional preface warned against the dangers of interpretation: 'Those who read the symbol do so at their peril' (p.xxiv). If we take the picture to be 'the symbol', we can see Wilde attempting to draw attention away from the issue of the nature of Dorian's transgressions. On the other hand, the epigram can simultaneously be read as an elegant challenge to the reader precisely to read the symbol. In either case they might not like what they find there – the fulfilment of same-sex desire; hence, the perilous nature of the activity. It is also perilous for another reason. The reader might not like what they find there: meaning, like Utterson and Poole gazing into Jekyll's mirror having broken into the cabinet, themselves. 'Each man sees his own sin in Dorian Gray', Wilde mischievously replies to the *Scots Observer*, 'queering' his reviewer. 'What Dorian Gray's sins are no one knows. He who finds them has brought them' (Lawler, p.347).

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[49] Alan Sinfield, *The Wilde Century: Effeminacy, Oscar Wilde and the Queer Movement* (London: Cassell, 1994), p. 101.

[50] In the first trial Edward Carson cross-examined Wilde on the nature of Basil's feelings for Dorian in the *Lippincott's* version (see Lawler, pp. 356-359).

We have contextualised the mid-nineteenth century magic picture story in terms of the invention of photography and considered Dorian's picture in terms of late nineteenth century developments in the use of photography, likening it to the mug shot. Photography provides one important example of the new visual culture that develops over the nineteenth century and which culminates with the birth of cinema, another 'optical miracle'. The suggestion is that there is some kind of parallel between the changing picture and early cinematic technology, for *Dorian Gray* is tapping into, or partly the product of, the same kind of undercurrents that also lead to the emergence of cinematography and the ensuing '"Living Picture" craze' (Coe, p.76).

# Chapter 4

## The City in *Fin-de-Siècle* Gothic

### Introduction

In this chapter I consider the depiction of the city in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. The first section looks at the issue of the mob. The conclusion to *Moreau* in which Prendick returns to a seemingly disorderly London provides my starting point. This leads into a more general discussion of the mob in historical and literary terms, including the way in which it is femininely gendered, as is reflected in *Jekyll and Hyde*, and concludes with the ending of *Moreau*. Next, I address the depiction of the city in Stevenson, notably in terms of its empty streets. Hyde represents an eruption of both bodily and civic disorder. In the third section I discuss the figure of the *flâneur*, principally with reference to the atavistic vampire. In the fourth section I examine the split city of *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, which I contrast with Stoker's London by way of conclusion.

### 4.1. The Mob

The island location of *Moreau* sets it apart from the urban Gothic of *Jekyll and Hyde*, *Dorian Gray* and *Dracula*. London only features in the final chapter of the novel, in which Prendick describes his harrowing return to civilisation and his subsequent voluntary exile 'near [...] the empty downland' (p.128). Nonetheless, 'The Man Alone' provides one of the more effective endings in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. Prendick suffers from a powerful and disturbing hallucination, which is in keeping with his manifest capacity for misapprehension on the island, but which is also indicative of his traumatised condition.

The distinction between the Beast People and human beings becomes confused on the island. Back in England, he cannot help but see his fellow countrymen in terms of 'another, still passably human, Beast People, animals half-wrought into the outward image of human souls, and that they would presently begin to revert, to show first this bestial mark and then that', despite his knowledge to the contrary (p.123). The idea that the island is a social microcosm is brought to the fore as Prendick views society in light of his experiences on the island. Prendick refers his case to a psychologist who happens to have known Moreau and they ease his condition; indeed, one might speculate that it is the psychologist who encourages Prendick to write down his adventure in order to get rid of his trauma. Nonetheless, there are still occasions when this hallucination becomes especially acute:

> Then I look about me at my fellow-men. And I go in fear. I see faces keen and bright, others dull or dangerous, others unsteady, insincere; none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul. I feel as though the animal was surging up through them; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale. (p.128)

In this way, Wells posits the idea of a kind of cultural degeneration through the misapprehending gaze of the narrator – the possible reversion of the British people and the attendant disintegration of society.

The theme of social disorder runs through *Moreau* in the form of Prendick's experiences in the dinghy, on the island and upon his return. One of the ways in which it manifests itself is in terms of 'the mob'.[1] Prendick even wakes up on the final morning on board the *Ipecacuanha* 'through an avenue of tumultuous dreams, dreams of guns and howling mobs' (p.20). If these dreams are indicative of his anxious state of mind, they are also strangely prophetic and set the tone for the anarchic events that follow on the island,

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[1] See Dryden for a discussion of the mob in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic with reference to late nineteenth-century crowd theory, and in particular *Moreau*, pp. 167-170.

which culminate with the death of Moreau and the revolt of the Beast People. The Beast People turn into a 'howling mob' on several occasions and their essential animal nature is disclosed in the process. Under the illusion that Moreau intends to vivisect him, Prendick flees from the enclosure and is pursued by the two scientists. He seeks refuge with the Beast People but they join in the hunt when the men arrive. He subsequently recalls how 'Moreau and Montgomery and their bestial rabble chased me across the island' (p.63). The participants of the chase collectively break the rules which govern the island and militate against animal or predatory behaviour: 'Not to chase other Men; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?' (p.57). Of course, the two scientists are simply concerned with the safety of their uninvited guest; nonetheless, the incident contributes to the erosion of the distinction between the humans on the island and the Beast People. Indeed, Prendick himself is incorporated into the 'howling mob' on another occasion, the pursuit of the Leopard Man, which serves as a further indication of his human capacity for reversion:

> There was a furious yelling and howling all about us. Every one was moving rapidly. For a moment I thought it was a general revolt. [...] I heard the crack of Moreau's pistol, and saw the pink flash dart across the tumult. The whole crowd seemed to swing round in the direction of the glint of fire, and I, too, was swung by the magnetism of the movement. In another second I was running, one of a tumultuous shouting crowd, in pursuit of the escaping Leopard Man. (p.89)

Prendick loses his self-possession and is absorbed into the crowd, less a collection of individuals than an undifferentiated mass, which has its thematic parallel in the irrepressible 'beast flesh' that always defies its human shaping. The irony is that Prendick manages to disassociate himself from the mob, to rediscover his individuality or humanity even, through an act of violence, by shooting the Leopard Man dead.

It is possible to link these images of the mob in *Moreau* to social unrest in the late 1880s, demonstrated by the Trafalgar Square riots, the match-girl strike and London Dock

strike, for example.[2] Judith Walkowitz explains how 'demonstrations of the East End unemployed in the wealthy West End, exacerbated fears of "Outcast London"' and notes the panic-stricken response to the first Trafalgar Square riots: '"King Mob" had emerged from the East to wreak havoc'.[3] In his chapter on the impact of revolutionary violence on the original Gothic in *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin* (1998), Richard Davenport-Hines discusses the reaction in late eighteenth-century Britain to the French mob: for example, the fear of 'cultural extinction' through violent social upheaval expressed by influential observers like Edmund Burke, along with the portrayal of the revolutionaries as cannibalistic monsters.[4] As Charles Dickens later went on to reflect in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), 'a crowd in those times stopped at nothing, and was a monster much dreaded'.[5] H. L. Malchow has traced the depiction of the lower-classes as cannibalistic in *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (1996): from earlier eighteenth-century accounts of English urban and rural violence, to Burke's cannibal proletariat, the use of cannibal imagery by the Victorians, especially Carlyle and Dickens, to the later nineteenth-century accounts of the urban working class and 'Outcast London' that influence the depiction of the city and its inhabitants in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic.[6] There is a symbiotic relationship between colonial and domestic discourse, for example, as accounts of the French mob, fed by Defoe's Carib, influence the subsequent perception of the racial

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[2] See Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 1996), pp. 253-254. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[3] Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (London: Virago Press, 1992), p. 28. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[4] Richard Davenport-Hines, *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin* (London: Fourth Estate, 1998), pp. 151-194. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[5] Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 159. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[6] Howard L. Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 61-76. All further references will be given in the body of the text. Davidson discusses *Jekyll and Hyde* in the context of 'Outcast London', pp. 37-39.

other, while Gothicised colonial imagery is transposed back onto urban working class by the social explorer. 'As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England? Civilisation, which can breed its own barbarians, does it not also breed its own pygmies?' asks William Booth in *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890): 'the stony streets of London, if they could but speak, would tell of tragedies as awful, of ruin as complete, or ravishments as horrible, as if we were in Central Africa' (quoted in Stevenson, p.179, p.181). As Peter Ackroyd notes in *London: The Biography* (2001), 'The paradox here is that the imperial city, the city which maintained and financed a world empire, contained within its heart a population more brutish and filthy than any of the races it believed itself destined to conquer.'[7]

Davenport-Hines calls Frankenstein's monster 'the greatest literary metaphor for the French Revolution' and notes that he 'was literally made from cannibalised human parts' (1998, pp.54-55). When the creature is rejected by the cottagers, he threatens to turn into a kind of one-man mob:

> The monster's reaction is that of a vengeful proletariat after frightened reformers have rejected their mass excesses: 'I, like the arch fiend, bore a hell within me; and, finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then to have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.' (Davenport-Hines, 1998, p.194)

He goes on to lay waste to Frankenstein's social world. At the same time, the notion of the creature as revolutionary metaphor is complicated by the fact that he himself suffers at the hands of the mob when he is driven out of the village. Furthermore, the idea that creature is 'made from cannibalised human parts' rather points the finger at Frankenstein. We shall return to the issue of the mob shortly, but just to pursue the cannibalism theme a little

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[7] Peter Ackroyd. *London: The Biography* (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 582. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

further, Victor's younger brother, William, presumes that the creature is a cannibal when he is seized by him. The creature recalls his words: 'Let me go [...] monster! Ugly wretch! You wish to eat me, and tear me to pieces' (p.117). However, it a misapprehension intended by Shelley to suggest the impossible prejudice faced by the creature, given how this child has already been inculcated with 'a horror of deformity', though the creature subsequently conforms to this savage image by murdering William (p.117). Nonetheless, as Malchow argues, 'it is Frankenstein himself who is the cannibal, who tears "to pieces" both the corpses from which he assembles his creature and the female mate he had begun to construct' (p.24).[8] Something similar could be said about the figure of Moreau; that he, too, practices a form of cannibalistic science, symbolized by the disfigured body of the puma. When Prendick and Montgomery go in search of Moreau, they find its 'gnawed and mutilated body' (p.103); that is to say, there a kind of equivalence through association between the marks left by the carnivorous or 'cannibalistic' Beast People and the scientist.

The crowd or mob is repeatedly femininely gendered. The Parisian revolutionaries are represented by the image of Marianne, who 'has her debased alter-image in the demonic harridan, a snaky-haired Gorgon in one well-known print, urging men to acts of barbarism and vengeance' (Malchow, p.84). Dickens's Madame Defarge carries a 'cruel knife' in her girdle, with which she decapitates the governor of the Bastille. Interestingly, he describes the mob in aquatic metaphors, as 'the living sea' and 'the raging flood' (p.214, p.218). In *Male Fantasies: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (1987), Klaus Theweleit discusses the dread of women evident in the novels and memoirs of the *Friekorps*. As Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinbach reflect in their foreword to the second volume, 'The fear of the

[8] Malchow takes William's identification of the creature as a cannibal at face value and offers it in support of his reading of the creature in terms of the racial other.

feminine is investigated in a seemingly endless series of liquid images in which woman is associated with all that might threaten to deluge or flood the boundaries of the male ego'.[9] In her discussion of the female presence in the city at the end of the nineteenth century, Parsons picks up on Andrea Huyssen's interpretation of 'the image of women in late nineteenth century, and particularly urban women *en masse*, as shaped by male anxiety', whom she quotes:

> The fear of the masses in the age of declining liberalism is always a fear of woman, a fear of nature out of control, fear of the unconscious, of sexuality, of the loss of identity and stable ego boundaries in the mass. (pp.28-29)

Parsons goes on to observe how *Punch* cartoons of the social unrest in London mentioned above, 'depicted a raging mob of grotesque women, alluding to stereotypical images of the guillotine mobs of the French Revolution' (p.29). In *Moreau*, it is the Puma Woman who eventually instigates the 'general revolt' that Prendick previously fears is taking place after the Leopard Man attacks Moreau. She escapes from the laboratory and subsequently batters Moreau to death with her fetters, the symbol of his cruel and oppressive operation. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Enfield and the doctor protect Hyde from the working-class women who surround him after he has trampled the child: 'they were wild as harpies,' recalls Enfield, 'I never saw a circle of such hateful faces' (p.34). The two gentlemen are able to contain the mania triggered by the sight of Hyde, in a way that the women are not, an effect perhaps of their supposed evolutionary superiority as white middle-class males, though this notion is obviously contradicted by the fact that Hyde resides within Jekyll and by extension the two men. The women have a lesser capacity for restraint, which echoes Prendick's observation about the female Beast People, how they are the first 'to disregard the injunction of

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[9] Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies Volume Two*, trans. by Chris Turner and Erica Carter (Polity Press, 1989), p. xvii.

decency', and which makes the women more like Hyde (p.121). Critics have also drawn attention to his own feminine characteristics, for example, his lack of emotional restraint. According to Davidson, 'he is described at one point as "weeping like a woman" and at another as "wrestling against the approaches of hysteria"; a condition always implicitly gendered as feminine, even when it occurs in a man' (p.39). The description of Soho where Hyde resides, Utterson's observation of 'many women of many different nationalities', strengthens this association between Hyde, disruptor of bodily order, and the working-class female, disruptor of the social body in the form the of hysterical city (p.48).

To return to the ending of *Moreau*, London, with its teeming life, exacerbates Prendick's hallucination. 'The crowd is not a single entity, manifesting itself on particular occasions, but the actual condition of London itself. The city is one vast throng of people', observes Ackroyd (p.389). Nonetheless, the perceived malign nature of the 'throng' makes it less like the crowd than the mob. 'When I lived in London the horror was wellnigh insupportable', recalls Prendick (p.128). There is no sanctuary to be found inside from the invasive presence of these animal-like humans: 'voices came through windows', like the tortured cries of the puma which torment him on the island, and locked doors were 'flimsy safeguards' (p.128). Outside, the crowd provides a lurid spectacle for the hallucinating narrator:

> prowling women would mew after me, furtive craving men glanced jealously at me, weary pale workers go coughing by me, with tired eyes and eager paces like wounded deer dripping blood, old people, bent and dull, pass murmuring to themselves, and all unheeding a ragged tail of gibing children. (p.129)

The breakdown of social bonds on the island and in the dinghy of the *Lady Vain* is prompted by the irruption of the animal (or the primitive), and the fear of predation is evident in the description of these feline women and the surreptitious, hungry looks of the

men. It is also projected onto the most unlikely of faces, so overriding is the hallucination. Prendick wanders 'into some library and there the intent faces over the books seemed but patient creatures waiting for prey' (p.129). Dryden comments, 'the metropolis is metaphorically a jungle, populated by predatory beings [...] that act not on reason but on instinct' (p.95). Darwinian anxieties are manifested here in social terms, though they seem to blur with a sense of urban alienation in the process. The modernity of London distinguishes the city from the island, yet somehow makes it fertile ground for Prendick's hallucination, which almost seems to anticipate T. S. Eliot's 'Unreal City' of *The Waste Land* (1922): 'Particularly nauseous were the blank expressionless faces of people in trains and omnibuses; they seemed no more my fellow-creatures than dead bodies would be, so that I did not dare to travel unless I was assured of being alone' (p.129).[10] By way of contrast to the specific facial qualities Prendick usually sees when the hallucination is particularly strong ('I see faces keen and bright, others dull or dangerous, others unsteady, insincere' (p.128)), it is the absence of facial qualities that disturbs or repels the observer in this instance, a darkened version of the undifferentiation of the city suggested by Ackroyd. The city seems to have deprived these corpse-like passengers of their humanity or their vitality. Unsurprisingly, Prendick extricates himself 'from the confusion of cities and multitudes' (p.129). Just as he shuns society on the island after the death of the Leopard Man, so he goes to live in relative isolation, spending his time in private study. He redirects his gaze towards the stars. 'There is', he suggests, 'a sense of infinite peace and protection

[10] 'While Saisselin states that "the city expanded the range of the seeable," for Benjamin it is the home of the unseeing stare, for the metropolis demands that one appear to look without seeing. In the crowded buses and trains of the city the passenger must still find empty spaces into which he or she must safely stare. In the metropolis the avoidance of the gaze and the refusal to return it are paramount. In the crowd, one may see many people, but one notices no one, one looks at no one, one recognizes no one' (Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 144).

in the glittering hosts of heaven' (p.129). However, the comfort of this self-portrait is undercut by the way in which it brings back into the reader's mind the image of the Beast Man, M'ling, whom Prendick spots silently 'watching the stars' from the deck of the *Ipecacuanha* (p.18).

### 4.2. Empty City Streets: *Jekyll and Hyde*

With the notion that 'the city is one vast throng of people' in mind, it is significant that the streets of London are characterised by an absence of the crowd in *Jekyll and Hyde*. A small mob gathers around Hyde, Utterson observes the female inhabitants of Soho and Jekyll describes how following the involuntary transformation in the park, Hyde drives around the city before he descends 'on foot [...] into the midst of the nocturnal passengers': but the predominant sense is that the streets are empty (p.88). This is partly because the walks that criss-cross the novel take place on a Sunday, or very late at night, though even when Utterson accompanies the frightened Poole back to Jekyll's home, we are told how '[the wind] seemed to have swept the streets unusually bare of passengers, [...] Mr. Utterson thought he had never seen that part of London so deserted' (p.59). Stevenson reduces the complexity of the city by evacuating the crowd and thereby enhancing its symbolic potential as buildings and door are brought into focus. At the same time, London becomes a kind of stage, just as the spotlight falls on Hyde's murder of Carew.[11] On this last occasion the empty streets deprive Utterson of the potential comfort of the crowd. His 'wish to see and touch his fellow-creatures' echoes Enfield's desire to see the police when

[11] For a discussion of the theatrical quality of *Jekyll and Hyde*, see Sandison, p. 228.

he is walking through the nocturnal city (p.59).[12] It is 'a crushing anticipation of calamity' with reference to Jekyll that prompts Utterson's wish, but it is the endless and anonymous lamplit streets themselves that spook Enfield and make him feel vulnerable (p.59). As he tells Utterson:

> 'I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning, and my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps. Street after street and all the folks asleep – street after street, all lighted up as if for a procession and all as empty as a church – till at last I got into that state of mind when a man listens and listens and begins to long for the sight of a policeman.' (p.33)[13]

This longing is not necessarily wishful thinking, despite what Hyde's appearance may suggest. 'This was now a guarded and supervised city', writes Ackroyd with reference to Dickens's night walks earlier in the century, 'its corners manned by officers of the law; no longer the anarchy and exuberance recorded by John Gay in the 1770s' (p.452). In fact, though the empty streets traversed by Enfield may recall Edinburgh's New Town (incidentally, the sawbones is from Edinburgh), we can link them to the mid-nineteenth century reorganisation of London that saw the removal of the Rookeries and its labyrinthine lanes.[14] 'Wide new roads cut through the slums', observes historian Jerry White, 'letting in air, light and police, and most important of all, disturbing the inhabitants from their old haunts' (quoted in Walkowitz, p.26). Ackroyd describes how the thoroughfare New Oxford Street was run through St Giles, helping to neutralise the threat to law and order posed by the mob in the process (p.142). In a similar way, Haussmanisation saw the reorganisation and dissolution of the urban space of revolutionary Paris. 'The new straight thoroughfares

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[12] I am indebted to Sandison for this observation.

[13] The description of the empty nocturnal streets in *The Beetle* clearly recalls *Jekyll and Hyde*: 'there are streets in London, long lines of streets which, at a certain period of the night [...] are clean deserted; in which there is neither foot-passenger nor vehicle – not even a policeman' (p. 70).

[14] See the photograph of the New Town in the chapter on *Jekyll and Hyde* in Christopher Frayling's, *Nightmare: The Birth of Horror* (London: BBC Books, 1996), p. 131.

were thought to be barricade-proof', notes Vanessa Schwartz in *Spectacular Realities* (1999), 'and would facilitate the rapid deployment of troops and provide unbroken lines of fire for artillery'.[15] We previously connected images of the mob in *Moreau* to social unrest at the turn-of-the-century. Roy Porter puts this social unrest into perspective, quoting W. H. Smith's complaint to the Commons with regard to the second Trafalgar Square Riots, that it was 'almost incredible that, for at least an hour, the most frequented streets in the West End of London should be entirely at the mercy of the mob', as evidence of just how orderly London had become in the course of the nineteenth century (p.253). In other words, we can look at the mob like the one which threatens to lynch Hyde as a remnant from the clearance of the slums, but we can also look at it in more metaphorical terms as a kind of spectre from the city's violent past, before the mid-to-late nineteenth century governance, atavistic London.

There is an irony in the fact that it is the 'disciplined' city streets that prompt Enfield's disquiet. It is also ironic that the lamps which make the nocturnal city visible, seem to turn these wide streets into another kind of labyrinth in the process (Utterson subsequently dreams of Hyde speeding 'through wider labyrinths of lamplighted city' (p.39)). Enfield's sense of foreboding is irrational in many respects, not least because he appears to be in a safer part of the city, but it is made legitimate by the sight of Hyde trampling the young girl underfoot. This is one of the frightening things about Hyde. Dryden comments:

> His crimes, the trampling of the child and the murder of Carew, occur under the lamplight designed to reduce crime, or enable its detection. The fact that such

[15] Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (London: University of California Press, 1999), p. 17. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

> illumination does not deter Hyde's brutality is even more sinister [...]. Hyde acts on instinct when he tramples or murders, and his consciousness of personal danger only kicks in after the deed. (p.93)

Hyde's instinctive violence differentiates him from Frankenstein's creature, whose acts of violence are premeditated and driven by an overpowering sense of injustice. By way of contrast, 'Hyde is a 'soul boiling with causeless hatreds' that simply overflow (p.89). If the creature is 'ostentatiously rural rather than urban' as Malchow suggests, Hyde is vice versa (p.19). The opening pages of the novel which describe the trampling incident, Utterson's waking nightmare, their subsequent meeting and the murder of Carew, repeatedly associate this violent ruffian with the city. He seems to appear suddenly on the urban scene before the gaze of the observer. Like 'Spring-Heeled Jack' earlier in the century, it is almost as if the streets themselves give birth to Hyde, just as they seem to swallow him up after the murder (Ackroyd, p.502). According to Ackroyd, 'The fact that "Jack", like a later and more notorious "Jack", was never apprehended serves only to deepen that sense of anonymity which suggests the monstrous figure to be some token or representation of London itself' (p.502). Hyde is finally cornered, of course, his dead body found in the cabinet, but we can also take him 'to be some token or representation of London itself' – its dark 'other self' most obviously (Stevenson, p.89). Hyde represents the 'anarchy' (and for that matter 'exuberance', given how 'his love of life is wonderful') that the nineteenth-century governance suppresses, or has failed to suppress, or even produces in the act of suppression (p.90). Hyde is depicted as a riotous presence in Jekyll's body, itself described as a 'city' in the statement (p.86); fleshly riot or a kind of male hysteria that is suggested by the way he appears 'to utter cries and voices' and the reference to him as 'that insurgent horror' (p.89). Like Frankenstein's creature and with his association with plurality in mind,

Hyde is also a kind of one-man mob that erupts from beneath the surface of the modern city to be let loose on its streets. We can read Hyde as a kind of counterpart to Poe's 'man of the crowd'. Ackroyd describes this figure as 'the embodiment of the crowd, the no-thing which feeds off the turbulent life of the streets. [...] The spirit of London' (p.395). Hyde brings turbulence to the streets through his violent actions and in the response they elicit. He represents the dark side of London that Enfield senses as he walks the lamplit streets.

### 4.3. The *Flâneur*

It should be stated that Hyde is not to be confused with 'the man of the crowd', who provides the model for Charles Baudelaire's figure of the *flâneur*.[16] Hyde is portrayed as a solitary figure walking the deserted nocturnal streets, which makes Dryden's assertion that 'he is the *flâneur*', indeed, that 'Jekyll and Hyde are *flâneurs*, bourgeois men enjoying the sights, sounds and pleasures of the city', problematic (p87, p.96). These streets cater for the *flâneur* in the same way that Haussman's changes make the Parisian streets comfortable places in which to stroll, but the absence of the crowd deprives Hyde of this particular role. Jekyll is one of a number of male characters in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic who are drawn to the attractions of the modern city. One recalls that Montgomery accepts the offer to become Moreau's research assistant, after having committed an unspecified transgression that necessitates his flight from England. When Prendick comes round aboard the *Ipecacuanha*, Montgomery soon questions him about his former student haunts, including the city's music halls and subsequently bemoans his fate as 'an outcast from civilisation – instead of

[16] For a discussion of the *flâneur*, see *The Flâneur*, ed. by Keith Tester (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

being a happy man, enjoying all the pleasures of London' (p.17). He was evidently unable to resist the temptations on offer; it would appear the more illicit ones as well. We can be more forthright about Jekyll, who describes how the 'pleasures' pursued by Hyde quickly go from being 'undignified' to 'monstrous' (p.81). In one way, it is the 'shocks' of modernity that produce Hyde, as Jekyll is repeatedly drawn to the attractions of the city, which makes Hyde a kind of parallel figure to the *flâneur*. Nonetheless, we have to take into consideration that Hyde is in essence a private subject which thereby differentiates him from the *flâneur*: unlike Dracula.

The atavistic vampire articulates a paradoxical yearning to be modern. 'I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London,' he tells Harker, 'to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is' (p.20). His speech clearly echoes Baudelaire's description of the *flâneur*, who 'set[s] up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite'.[17] Dracula's reference to 'death' clearly hints that he is no 'lover of life' like Baudelaire's *flâneur* (p.9). Dracula thinks of London as an attractive hunting ground, its crowds a potential source of food and concealment. Yet there is an additional sense perhaps that Dracula wants to translate himself into modernity by assuming the role of the *flâneur*. His passage from East to West is a temporal as well as a physical journey. Dracula chooses London because it is a modern city, with all that modernity entails. As Ben Singer observes,

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[17] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. & ed. Jonathan Mayne (London: Phaidon, (1964) 1995), p. 9. All further references will be given in the body of the text. For a discussion of Dracula as *flâneur*, see Gill Davies, 'London in *Dracula*; Dracula in London', (2004) <http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/davies.html> [accessed 23 February 2007] (para. 9).

> Modernity implied a phenomenal world – a specifically urban one – that was markedly quicker, more chaotic, fragmented, and disorientating than in previous phases of human culture. Amid the unprecedented turbulence of the big city's traffic, noise, billboards, street signs, jostling crowds, window displays, and advertisements, the individual faced a new intensity of sensory stimulation. The metropolis subjected the individual to a barrage of impressions, shocks, and jolts.[18]

According to Baudelaire, one of the pleasures of *flânerie* is to be simultaneously 'at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world' (p.9). The *flâneur* is a public, yet anonymous figure. Poe's narrator concludes that 'This old man [...] is the type and the genius of deep crime' because he cannot be separated from the crowd (p.481). Dracula speaks of the desire to merge into the crowd: 'I am content if I am like the rest,' he tells Harker, 'so that no man stops if he sees me' (p.20). He realizes his wish by loitering anonymously in Piccadilly. Despite Dracula's distinctive appearance, Mina only picks him out of the crowd because Harker happens to have spotted him and her attention is redirected by his gaze of horrified astonishment. According to Gill Davies, this 'represents the high point of Dracula's power [...] [as] Dracula acquires the characteristics of the figure of the flaneur and moves through the city with the powerful freedom associated with that figure'.[19] In this instance the vampire is staring at a young female shopper. As Priscilla Ferguson notes with reference to the male gender of the *flâneur*, 'women are essential components of the urban drama that the *flâneur* observes. A woman idling on the streets is to be 'consumed' and 'enjoyed' along with the rest of the sights that the city affords'.[20] The vampire is, of course, the desiring *flâneur*: he may literally intend to consume her. To that

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[18] Ben Singer, 'Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism', in Leo Charney and Vanessa R Schwartz (eds), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 72-99 (pp. 72-73).

[19] Gill Davies, 'London in *Dracula*; Dracula in London', (2004) <http:// www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/march2004/davies.html> [accessed 23 February 2007] (para. 9).

[20] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, 'The *Flâneur* on and off the Streets of Paris', in *The Flâneur* (see Tester, above), pp. 22-42 (p. 27). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

extent there is an ironic parallel between the vampire and the shopper. According to the ideology of *flânerie* suggests Ferguson, 'No woman is able to attain the aesthetic distance so crucial to the *flâneur*'s superiority. She is unfit for *flânerie* because she desires the objects spread before her and acts upon that desire' (p.27). The vampire, too, desires the female object before him and appears to act upon that desire, when he ominously follows her up the street.

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the empty streets leave Hyde exposed; spotted by Enfield, he cannot melt away after he has trampled the child, for example. It is not the crowd that conceals Hyde but Jekyll, although Jekyll is likened to a 'city' in the statement ('Jekyll was now my city of refuge'); figuratively speaking, Jekyll acts like the crowd that conceals Poe's 'old man', as Hyde has done for Jekyll (p.86). But it is only an appropriate metaphor for Jekyll because he is the public figure, not Hyde, though perhaps not a *flâneur*. The *flâneur* finds anonymity in the crowd, whereas Jekyll is more interested in recognition; in cultivating the public image of severity, at odds with the more flamboyant figure of the *flâneur*, that precisely affords Hyde such good concealment, theoretically at least. One might also ask why Jekyll would need an incognito in Hyde if one were provided by the crowd. Dryden rightly identifies *flânerie* as a male bourgeois activity:

> *Flânerie* relied on the leisure to roam at will to take in the sights and atmosphere of the city, a luxury not easily afforded to women, or working-class men. [...] Dorian Gray's years as leisured young man lend themselves exactly to the life of a *flâneur*. (p.58)

Hyde has time and money on his hands, but whether he can be said to be a bourgeois male as Dryden suggests, is very much open to question in a way that again distinguishes him from the *flâneur*. This violent ruffian seems more of a Bill Sykes figure. Hyde is not only flagrantly urban but ostentatiously urbane: 'no gentleman but wishes to avoid a scene,' he

tells Enfield and the doctor when they threaten to expose him; that is to say, this 'spiv' or 'wide boy' offers an imitation of the bourgeois male, he plays the role of gentleman (p.34). 'I amused myself with being a *flâneur*, a dandy, a man of fashion', writes Wilde in *De Profundis* (Wilde, 1977, p.913). Dryden's suggestion that Dorian and Lord Henry are *flâneurs* is more compelling, even though *Dorian Gray* feels more of a sedentary novel than *Jekyll and Hyde*, a quality Wilde acknowledged with reference to the magazine edition: 'I am afraid it is rather like my own life – all conversation and no action. I can't describe action: my people sit in chairs and chatter'.[21] In conversation with Lord Henry, Dorian explains the effect their initial acquaintance has had upon him:

> 'For days after I met you, something seemed to throb in my veins. As I lounged in the Park or strolled down Piccadilly, I used to look at every one who passed me, and wonder, with a mad curiosity, what sort of lives they led. Some of them fascinated me. Others filled me with terror. There was an exquisite poison in the air. I had a passion for sensations.' (p.48)

Lord Henry has awoken Dorian sexually and this manifests itself in the form of the desiring *flâneur* in this instance, although his feelings of 'terror' also recall Prendick when confronted by the hallucinatory mob. Like the *flâneur*, Dorian dawdles or strolls in public, which allows him to scrutinise the passers-by. Were they to return his gaze and subject him to equal scrutiny, they might detect beneath the surface of his leisurely appearance the powerful feelings they have aroused. Dorian subsequently cultivates the returned gaze by turning himself into a dandy. As Parsons points out, 'An important difference between the dandy and the *flâneur* is that the latter observes whilst the former displays himself for observation. [...] The dandy did not want to merge with the crowd but display his

[21] *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (London 1962), p. 255.

distinction from it' (p.20). That said, the *flâneur* merges with the crowd but is also separate, an observer.

### 4.4. The Divided City

In *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (1998), Franco Moretti considers how the nineteenth century novel tackles the complexity of the contemporary city. This complexity is illustrated with reference to Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889); specifically, the contrast shown by its colour-coded map of social classes on macroscopic and microscopic levels:

> the whole is quite ordered – but its individual parts are instead largely random. It is striking how rapid the transitions are, between the urban sub-systems; how poverty replaces wealth at every unpredictable turn of the street. [...] It is the *confusion* evoked with fear and wonder by most London visitors.[22]

According to Moretti, 'Most urban novels *simplify* the urban system by turning it into a neat oppositional pattern which is much easier to read' (p.107). London is split between the fashionable, upper-class West End, as described in the 'silver-fork' novels, with its squares, exclusive gathering places and parks: and the criminal, lower-class East End, as described in *Oliver Twist* (1838), with its labyrinthine lanes and courts (p.79, p.84). By way of contrast, *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) unifies the city through the insertion of '*a third London*: a sort of wedge that holds the two extremes together', in the form of the 'middle class' (pp.116-7). A number of critics have commented on the modern setting of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic, the way in which the city becomes 'the primary Gothic landscape' (Byron, p.134). How does it tackle this complexity and for what purpose?

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[22] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), p. 78. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

### 4.4.1. *Dorian Gray*

Stevenson and Wilde employ binary models of the city, which both cater for the double life led by Jekyll and Dorian, and symbolise their physical split between self and other. Wilde simplifies the city in the way described by Moretti. Dorian increasingly divides his time between the West End, 'the place of social decorum and appearances', and the East End, 'the place of disguise, of furtive pleasures' (Seed, 1987, p.46). Edouard Roditi states, 'Between these two worlds, no decent or comfortable middle class, no quiet family life, no dormitory sections in Wilde's vision of the big city. From the brilliant lit society [...] we step straight into a dim slum-land.'[23] The middle class with which Dickens heals the division of the city in *Our Mutual Friend* according to Moretti, is not only physically absent from *Dorian Gray* but the repeated target of Wilde's scorn, both in terms of Lord Henry's wit and Dorian's more prosaic invective. Dorian tells Basil, who confronts him with the vicious rumours circulating about his private life:

> 'The middle classes air their moral prejudices over their gross dinner-tables [...]. And what sort of lives do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite.' (pp.144-45)

As far as the mirroring between the city and bodily identity is concerned, Halberstam points to the spatial difference between self and other in *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*:

> In Wilde's novel the other self is an outer rather than an inner self, it is hidelike, all surface, a canvas; but unlike Stevenson's Hyde, the portrait exists apart from Dorian Gray. [...] While science separated Jekyll from Hyde and seemed to produce a repressed self, here art serves to separate Dorian from his hideous other spatially. (p.70)

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[23] Edouard Roditi, (from) 'Fiction as Allegory', in Lawler, pp. 366-372 (pp. 369-70). *Contra* Roditi, Dryden offers a more sympathetic reading of the depiction of social division in *Dorian Gray* in her extensive analysis of the theme of duality (pp. 110-146).

Thus, the separation between Dorian and his double is reflected in Wilde's schismatic depiction of the city.

Seed notes how Dorian's existence becomes split between east and west towards the end of the novel, and how narrative gaps mark the times when he has disappeared from public view (1987, p.46). To take the second point first, Dorian's disappearances recall the way in which Jekyll drops out of the public gaze in order to 'spring headlong into the sea of liberty' (p.80). Dorian's 'mysterious and prolonged absences' clearly hint at some form of clandestine debauchery, further suggested by the monstrous features of the portrait he scrutinises upon his return and joyfully contrasts with his youthful, handsome mirror image (p.124). This private scrutiny the picture is subject to is paralleled by the public scrutiny Dorian is subject to upon his re-entrance into society: 'men would [...] look at him with cold searching eyes, as though they were determined to discover his secret' (p.136). Licentiousness is not only associated with the degenerate East End in the novel. This *fin-de-siècle* libertine also plays host to the fashionable upper class young males he consorts with, in the relative seclusion of his country mansion in Nottinghamshire, 'astounding the county by the wanton luxury and gorgeous splendour' (p.135). The gallery there displays pictures of Dorian's libertine ancestors, including 'the second Lord Beckenham, the companion of the Prince Regent in his wildest days', who 'had led the orgies at Carlton House' (p.138). The text hints that Dorian acts in a similar vein at Selby Royal. The narrator informs the reader how the public came to regard Lord Beckenham 'as infamous' (p.138). In *De Profundis*, Wilde repeatedly compares his own infamy to that of the Marquis de Sade, whose influence it may be possible to detect in the hint of sequestered orgies here. According to Michael Foldy, 'The parallel is instructive, less for equating Wilde's actions

with those of the most infamous of modern sexual libertines, than for comparing the ways in which their personal aesthetics justify acts of sodomy.'[24] The novel Lord Henry lends to Dorian also has a distinctly Sadean flavour, in its representation of 'the awful and beautiful forms of those whom Vice and Blood and Weariness had made monstrous' (p.139). Christopher Nassaar notes Wilde's familiarity with Sade, indicated by his references to the Marquis and his works, and draws on the observation made by Richard Ellmann 'that Wilde, after his first serious homosexual experience in 1886, regarded himself as an artist-criminal and wrote as such', in order to suggest, therefore, that 'he would have been attracted to Sade as a fellow criminal-artist, just as he was fascinated with the poisoner-artist Thomas Wainewright'.[25] Nassaar detects the influence of Sade in the depiction of Dorian's moral decline but argues that his guilty reaction to the murder of Basil 'is almost certainly a Wildean critique of Sade's criminal excesses', on account of the fact that he does not cross 'the scarlet line of regarding murder as a source of pleasure', a stance Wilde briefly relinquishes in *Salome* (1894) (p.34). Yet Dorian's guilt is plainly ephemeral and though the murder may be motivated by the need for concealment, it is really Dorian who insists upon the exposure of his other self. In fact, we can read the murder as an extension of his quest for sensation – sensation which manifests itself in the form of his guilt and which is as short-lived as any of the other sensations he pursues in his confrontation with boredom.

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[24] Michael Foldy, *The Trials of Oscar Wilde: Deviance, Morality, and Late-Victorian Society* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 100. For a brief discussion of de Sade and his place in the Gothic, see Davenport-Hines, 1998, pp. 167-179.

[25] Christopher Nassaar, 'Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Salomé*', *Explicator*, 57: 1 (1998), pp. 33-36 (p. 34). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

Dorian's trip to the opium den in the docks, having spent the evening at a social gathering at Lady Narborough's, illustrates the depth of the division of his double life.[26] Its addition to the revised edition of the novel went some way to addressing the felt imbalance between 'conversation' and 'action'. For Moretti, the coach ride that takes Eugene and Mortimer from the West End to Limehouse, symbolically unifies the two halves of London in *Our Mutual Friend* (p.86). Dorian's seemingly never-ending journey only reinforces the division between the two, its incessant quality symbolic of the widening gap between his public and private selves. It certainly contrasts with Watson's painless drive to the East End opium den in *The Man with the Twisted Lip*, published in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892). Watson finds Holmes there in disguise, the detective's single visit to the East End as Moretti points out, which he explains accordingly: 'Doyle is forging the myth of the omniscient detective, and it would be unwise to let him go near Jack the Ripper's Whitechapel' (p.137). Ackroyd recounts how after the Ripper murders of 1888, 'All the anxieties about the city in general then became attached to the East End in particular, as if in some peculiar sense it had become a microcosm of London's own dark life' (p.678). Wilde makes an oblique reference to the murders when Dorian sits down to think after he has slain Basil, an act that brings murder into the heart of the West End, of course: 'Every year – every month, almost – men were strangled in England for what he had done. There had been a madness of murder in the air. Some red star had come too close to the earth' (p.153). It is these murders, four of which took place in Whitechapel, which gives resonance to the rumours that Dorian has been spotted in Whitechapel; that and the fact that, 'By the 1880s, Whitechapel had come to epitomize the social ills of "Outcast

[26] Mighall makes this point in his introduction to *Dorian Gray* (p. xii).

London,"' as Walkowitz notes in her discussion of the media scandal of Jack the Ripper (p.193).

Press coverage of the murders emphasised Whitechapel's easy accessibility from the West End, relevant to our discussion of Dorian's difficult journey east (Walkowitz, p.193). Its protracted nature is one of the ways in which Wilde heavily codes the journey to suggest the passage into an othered space. At one point, the hansom has to retrace its steps. The circuitous journey mirrors Dorian's psychological state as he continuously turns over Lord Henry's words in his head: 'To cure the soul by the means of the senses, and the senses by the means of the soul' (p.176). Of course, Dorian is in the grip of an addiction; intolerably, his desperate need for the drug makes the journey seem even longer than it already is. His sense of speed is distorted: 'On and on plodded the hansom, going slower, it seemed to him, at each step', and he even lashes out at the horse with his cane like a madman (p.177). In their introduction to *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (1995), Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz observe:

> As typified by flânerie, modern attention was conceived as not only visual and mobile but also fleeting and ephemeral. Modern attention was vision in motion. Modern forms of experience relied not simply on movement but on the juncture of movement and vision: moving pictures. One obvious precursor of moving pictures was the railroad, which eliminated traditional barriers of space and distance as it forged a bodily intimacy with time, space, and motion. The railroad journey anticipated more explicitly than any other technology an important facet of the experience of cinema: a person in a seat watches moving visuals through a frame that does not change position.[27]

In a sense, that 'person' is Dorian here. This protocinematic coach ride turns London into a hellish spectacle, as Dorian observes 'with listless eyes the sordid shame of the great city' (p.177). 'Listless' suggests less the hunger for opium than its satisfaction, even though he is

[27] Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, 'Introduction', in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (see Singer, above), pp. 1-12 (p. 6).

on the way to the den (which, incidentally, he leaves before smoking any opium), and many of the surreal descriptive details have the ring of a drug-induced nightmare: the yellow skull-like moon, the black web-like streets, or 'the strange bottle-shaped kilns with their orange fan-like tongues of fire' (p.177). As the shifting colours and shapes suggest, this is nothing if not the lurid kaleidoscopic city. One occasional set of impressions is especially interesting: 'Most of the windows were dark, but now and then fantastic shadows were silhouetted against some lamp-lit blind. He watched them curiously. They moved like monstrous marionettes, and made gestures like live things' (p.177). Earlier, we drew on Prawer's notion of 'the cinematic imagination' to link the picture to early cinematic technology. Here, Dorian seems to be witness to the repeat performance of a monstrous puppet-show, the precursor to the cinematograph.

### 4.4.2. *Jekyll and Hyde*

Stevenson charts the moral topography of 'the native land of the hypocrite' in *Jekyll and Hyde*, though Jekyll defends himself against the charge of hypocrisy, unconvincingly, by arguing that he does not 'pose as being moral' in public and lead an immoral life in private: 'both sides of me were in dead earnest', he suggests (p.76). Again, London is socially polarised, this time between the respectable upper-middle class and the slum dweller. However, in this instance both are to be found in the West End. Stevenson eschews the topographical distance subsequently employed by Wilde, and maps onto the West End the social gap which will manifest itself between east and west in *Dorian Gray*. These social poles are represented by Cavendish Square, where Dr Lanyon lives and which is coloured in gold on Booth's map ('Upper-middle and Upper classes. Wealthy'), and by

Soho, where Hyde dwells and which is flecked with black ('Lowest class. Vicious semi-criminal') (Moretti, p.76). Cavendish Square, Soho and Regent's Park are the identifiable locations in *Jekyll and Hyde*. In fact, although it is indisputably an urban novella, given its few specified locations, without the repeated references to 'London', the reader might possibly forget that it is set in the capital. It is the opposite case with *Dorian Gray*. 'Littering the novel with references to well-known London streets and landmarks', states Dryden, 'Wilde seems to revel in his knowledge of the geography of London' (p.139). The two areas of Cavendish Square and Soho are within easy walking distance of one another. As for where the other characters live, the lawyer introduces himself to Hyde as 'Mr Utterson of Gaunt Street' (p.40). There is a Gaunt Street in Elephant and Castle on the other side of the river, which suggests that the address of Utterson, who is described as 'lean' in the opening paragraph, is allegorical rather than real, for he lives within walking distance of Lanyon (p.31). Significantly, it is not specified where Jekyll lives. He inhabits an attractive townhouse, though the square itself has evidently seen better days, the other houses 'for the most part decayed from their high estate and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men; map-engravers, architects, shady lawyers and the agents of obscure enterprises' (p.42). The reference to 'shady lawyers' immediately brings Utterson to mind and hints that he may live in the vicinity, which would mean that the square is also near Lanyon's, making Soho a convenient location from the laboratory. Yet, wherever the house is located, it is the contrast between its front and back that is important: 'a great air of wealth and comfort' on the one hand, 'prolonged and sordid negligence' on the other – and an even shorter walk between the two (p.42, p.32). In Moretti's words, 'It is striking how rapid the transitions are, between the urban sub-systems; how poverty replaces wealth',

something that is also demonstrated by the proximity between the impoverished area of the laboratory and the prosperous by-street Utterson and Enfield wander down.

The opening of the novel sees the two friends on one of their regular Mayhewesque 'rambles' and they are in a 'dingy neighbourhood' like a pair of urban explorers (p.32). They do not appear to enjoy their walks according to those who see them, but the implication is that they derive a vicarious pleasure from visiting the less salubrious parts of town.[28] We join them as they turn into the by-street: it is 'comparatively empty of passage' being Sunday, though the description of its flourishing trade during the week gives it a kind of phantasmal quality (p.32). Likened to 'a fire in a forest', this radiant street 'instantly caught and pleased the eye of the passenger', and is juxtaposed with the dilapidated exterior of the laboratory which is conspicuously distasteful (p.32). There are hints that the by-street is less respectable than it might appear (the references to 'thriving trade' and 'rows of smiling saleswomen' hint at prostitution perhaps), which complicates the contrast, just as the fact that the nearby square is on its way down complicates the contrast between the front and back of Jekyll's: behind the appearance of extremes lies the suggestion of continuity. Nonetheless, it could be said that *Jekyll and Hyde* simplifies London socially but makes a virtue of its randomness, largely for the purpose of the symbolic depiction of bodily identity. When Enfield highlights the difficulty of identifying the laboratory because 'the buildings are so packed together about the court, that it's hard to say where one ends and another begins,' he could be talking about Jekyll-Hyde themselves; the confused or indeterminate identity that also manifests itself in the slippage between pronouns in the statement (p.35). The idea that the monstrous other shares the same body as the self is

[28] For a discussion of nineteenth century urban exploration, see Walkowitz, pp. 15-39.

reflected, both in the actual construction of Jekyll's residence in terms of attractive townhouse and dilapidated laboratory, and in this close proximity between the dis/reputable areas of its front and back. The fact that Soho is located in the heart of the West End is also of symbolic significance. 'Surrounded by the higher districts of May Fair and Pall Mall', suggests Mighall, 'Soho's relation to respectable London is therefore a topographical replication of the Hyde within the Jekyll' (p.151). Hyde and Soho are analogous as dark, degenerate, uncanny interiors further characterised by plurality and ill-definition, and the power to horrify the observer. If we read the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde symbolically, Jekyll's ultimate demise is suggestive of the implosion of the social body. The 'minor clusters of "dangerous classes"' Booth maps onto Soho are representative of the district in the novella (Moretti, p.136). Utterson lives near Lanyon, so Hyde's abode cannot be far that away and it is morning, but Soho is evidently too rough to risk walking through. Utterson and the inspector take a cab instead, which the fog-bound city reduces to a snail's pace, thus making the distance seem further than it might seem. In his discussion of *Pelham* (1832), Moretti observes how the Strand is roughly 'as far east as the novel "knows" what London is like' (p.83). Soho represented unknown territory in the West End, even to social explorers at the end of the 1890s. 'It is probable that there is no district so comparatively unknown as that portion of West London which is compromised within the area of Soho', wrote Arthur Sherwell in *Life in West London* (1897), 'Soho remains to a very large extent a *terra incognita*'.[20]

In fact, Soho was formerly hunting grounds, 'So-ho' or So-hoe' being the call of the huntsman who originally rode across its fields' (Ackroyd, p.531). It is, therefore, a doubly

[20] Arthur Sherwell. *Life in West London: A Study and Contrast* (1897), Part One, Introductory, para. 1. <http://www.victorianlondon.org/publications/westlondon-1.htm> [last accessed 24 February 2007].

appropriate location for the hunter or predator Hyde, who is also the proverbial fox. Enfield tells Utterson how he gives 'a view halloa' or fox-hunter's cry, when he spots Hyde trample the child and seeks to detain him, while Jekyll recalls how he becomes 'the common quarry of mankind' following his transformation into Hyde in the park (p.33, p.87). Soho was also characterised by its foreignness. Ackroyd suggests how the presence of the French Huguenots 'created an odd air of strangeness or unfamiliarity which encouraged natives of other countries to feel more secure in its environs. In certain respects it was *not English*' (p.532). When the fog momentarily lifts, Utterson observes 'many women of many different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass' (p.48). Multiplicity, femininity and foreignness are all qualities associated with Hyde. Hyde is also extracted from the body through imbibing and his mental state is one of intoxication: 'I was conscious of a heady recklessness', writes Jekyll with reference to the first transformation into Hyde, while his realisation of his undiluted wickedness 'braced and delighted me like wine' (p.78). Mighall notes how 'the stereotypes of urban investigation are reproduced' in the description of Soho (p.150). The gin shop Utterson briefly spots identifies Soho in terms of Booth's 'Darkest London': 'As in Africa streams intersect the forest in every direction, so the gin-shop stands at every corner with its River of the Water of Death' (quoted in Stevenson, p. 183).

Soho was also associated with prostitution. According to Ackroyd,

> The female, and male, prostitutes of the area were well known by the middle of the nineteenth century; once more the relative 'foreignness' of the neighbourhood ensured for more relaxed sexual behaviour than in Lombard Street, for example, or in Pimlico. (p.534)

One might speculate that Jekyll's double life evolves out of the pursuit of sexual pleasure and that it is his familiarity with Soho that leads him to house Hyde there. The suspicion of

a sexual liaison between Jekyll and Hyde lurks behind their association at the beginning of the novel, fed by the misapprehension that Hyde is blackmailing Jekyll. With this link between Soho and prostitution in mind, Hyde looks like 'rough trade'; he is blackmailing a former client. As Davidson notes, homosexual scandal is also suggested in the circumstances of Hyde's murder of Sir Danvers Carew (p.37).

The fog makes the city seem insubstantial, or unreal, and manifests itself as another lurid kaleidoscopic spectacle:

> A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr. Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful reinvasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. (pp.47-8)

The fog effectively turns morning into night and makes Soho like the 'visually impenetrable' African forest (Malchow, p.51). The text signals that the two men have crossed the border into the space of the other. In a way that again demonstrates the parallel between the city and the body, Davidson links the description of the foreign women to Jekyll's notion of the subject as 'a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens' (p.76), and notes how, 'The slum, like the body in Jekyll's descriptions, is a chaotic site of "fog," "vapours" and "swirling wreaths"' (Davidson, p.39). It, too, seems to be on the point of dissolution. Jekyll also describes Hyde 'like a thick cloak' (p.80) and as his 'impenetrable mantle' (p.81); in other words, Hyde is analogous to the London fog which as Ackroyd suggests, provided 'cover for theft, violence and rape on

an unprecedented scale. In that sense the fog was indeed "particular" to London because it intensified and emphasised all the darker characteristics of the city' (p.433). The agent of concealment as indicated by his name, Hyde affords cover for Jekyll's transgressions, of course.

Like the fog, Hyde is insubstantial, evasive and fluid. In the discussion of *Moreau*, we connected the darkness on the island that renders shapes indistinct to the plasticity, or fluidity, that always defeats Moreau. We can also read the invasive fog then as symbolic of the 'beast flesh' that envelops Jekyll. The intrusive quality of the fog is further demonstrated when Utterson visits Jekyll in his cabinet after he has been to Soho: 'a lamp was set lighted on the chimney shelf, for even in the houses the fog began to lie thickly' (p.50) ('locked doors were flimsy safegaurds' writes Wells in *Moreau* (p.128)). The fog follows in Hyde's footsteps, threading its way from Soho to the laboratory. It crosses the boundary from outside to inside in the process like Hyde himself. 'You have not been mad enough to hide this fellow?' puns Utterson (p.50). Hyde is concealed within Jekyll, who simultaneously evades the question and answers to the lawyer's satisfaction: 'I swear to God I will never set eyes on him again' (p.51). Subsequent events not only indicate otherwise but suggest an inverted analogy between the fog, which cannot be shut out of the house, and Hyde, who cannot be shut inside the body.

The fog heightens the eerie quality of the laboratory:

> It was the first time that the lawyer had been received in that part of his friend's quarters; and he eyed the dingy, windowless structure with curiosity, and gazed round with a distasteful sense of strangeness as he crossed the theatre, once crowded with eager students and now lying gaunt and silent [...] and the light falling dimly through the foggy cupola. (p.50)

The absence of windows, also mentioned in the initial description of the laboratory as Utterson and Enfield inspect it from the outside, characterise the building in terms of secrecy. Once on the inside, Utterson gazes with characteristic ambivalence, simultaneously interested and repulsed; partly interested perhaps because of this repulsion. Significantly, the 'sense of strangeness' is stirred by another image of emptiness. The bare nocturnal streets disconcert Enfield. In Soho, the fog momentarily lifts like a theatre curtain to reveal a scene from 'outcast London', but Hyde has fled; his 'ransacked' home is empty (p.49). Here, it is the thought of the theatre previously full of students long since departed that partly makes it uncanny. What is also interesting is how the 'gaunt and silent' laboratory is like Utterson himself. Utterson lives on Gaunt Street and is described as 'lean' in the opening paragraph. He is also known for his reticence, his name being ironic. The implication is that as Utterson gazes around the laboratory, he is engaged in some kind of self-encounter, although he would not recognise it as such.

The idea that Stevenson and Wilde use the geography of London as a pretext for representing the duality of the subject indicates a certain textual coherence: one that is disrupted by the possibly raised by both writers that subjectivity is actually multiplicitous, from Jekyll's conjecture as to the limitation of his discovery 'that man is not truly one, but truly two' (p.76), that subjectivity may be pluralized or utterly fragmented instead, to Dorian's similar conclusion:

> He used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the Ego in man as a thing simple, permanent, reliable, and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature. (p.137)

As Byron suggests, '"Duality" and "doubleness" are perhaps not totally appropriate terms to use in discussing these texts', even though this idea is reinforced by the geography of the

city (p.138). To put in another way, the geography of the city – Stevenson's internal division of the West End, or Wilde's division of London into the West and East End – is rendered simplistic in figurative terms by the speculations of the respective characters. This would be less true of *Jekyll and Hyde* than it is of *Dorian Gray*, on account of the images of plurality and confusion we have drawn attention to in the former: but regardless of the exact nature of the thematic mirroring between the city and identity, what quickly becomes clear is how differently London is depicted by Stoker. *Dracula* eschews the symbolic geometry of the other two novels. There is a more radial sense of London, though the division between east and west remains important; only, not because it reflects the duality of identity but in relation to the actual movements of the Count himself.

### 4.5. London in *Dracula*

Dracula has already crossed from eastern to western Europe. According to Stephen Arata, one of the central fears that informs *Dracula* is that of 'reverse colonization', the idea 'that what has been represented as the "civilized" world is on the point of being colonized by "primitive" forces'.[30] It is Harker's expressed fear that Dracula intends to slowly take over London. Gazing upon the recently feasted vampire at rest in his box in the depths of the castle, it occurs to him that:

> This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps for centuries to come, he might, amongst its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. (p.51)

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[30] Stephen D. Arata, 'The Occidental Tourist: *Dracula* and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization', *Victorian Studies*, 33, (Summer 1990), pp. 621-645 (p. 623). For a critique of the idea of reverse colonisation see William Hughes, 'A Singular Invasion: Revisiting the Postcoloniality of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', in *Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre*, ed. by Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 88-102.

Harker's consciousness of his own complicity seems to make this 'thought' especially maddening. His detachment collapses as he yields to a paroxysm of violence, bringing a shovel down on the vampire's detestable face. This image from the end of the journal is in total contrast to that of the unruffled observer evident at the beginning. His loss of self-command is indicative of the psychological toll of his sojourn at the castle and even contrasts with the controlled, ritualised aggression with which the vampire Lucy is killed. At the same time, the violent nature of the act itself anticipates the kind of transformation the men undergo in their battle with the Count, given their use of violence and the way they operate outside the law. As Smith notes, 'the vampire hunters become monstrous in the process, and so the novel's ostensible search for purity and models of bourgeois "decency" collapses under its inability to develop a coherent moral vision which keeps the degenerate at bay' (p.146). This is supported by Van Helsing's description of the men after they have flushed Dracula out of London: 'He saw that with but one earth-box left, and a pack of men following like dogs after a fox, this London was no place for him' (p.371). The men are less like huntsmen than their hounds. The bestial image of 'a pack of men' recalls the various chases conducted by the Beast Men in *Moreau*.

The cartage firm transport Dracula's boxes from King's Cross to Carfax Abbey, located next to the asylum in Purfleet. Dracula's initial passage from east to west is mirrored in his subsequent flights from Carfax into the city. Unaware of the significance of what he sees, not unlike Harker in Transylvania, Seward is the first to spot Dracula in the form of a bat 'flapping its silent and ghostly way to the west' (p.143). Dracula is on his way to Hillingham, where Lucy will record in her diary 'a sort of scratching or flapping at the window' (p.144). Her assumption that she must have fallen asleep, again, with its echoes of

Harker, discloses to the reader that Dracula has successfully renewed his predation upon her. Seward's observation of Dracula's westward flight reminds the reader of Purfleet's eastern location on the outskirts, something that is emphasised both by Seward taking the train into London and by his melancholy westward gaze, which recalls Dracula in some respects and suggest that the asylum is in one way analogous to the castle, even though this role more properly falls to Carfax:

> It was a shock to me to turn from the wonderful smoky beauty of a sunset over London, with its lurid lights and inky shadows and all the marvellous tints that come on foul clouds even as on foul water, and to realise all the grim sternness of my own cold stone building, with its wealth of breathing misery, and my own desolate heart to endure it all. (p.152)

Seward's desolation is caused by Lucy's rejection but it is possible to imagine that Dracula's journey to the west has been prompted in part by a similar kind of realisation.

Stoker mixes real or familiar locations with fictional addresses like Hillingham. The references to the train stations give the city an axial definition, while parts of London may remain hazy, even to the Londoner. For example, when the two doctors walk to the cemetery in which the Westenra tomb is located, Seward describes how, 'The Professor had evidently noted the road we were to go, for he went on unhesitatingly; but, as for me, I was in quite a mix-up as to locality' (p.241). If it is an irony that the foreigner should lead the way on one level, on another level it is symbolic of his primary role, not only in the disclosure and destruction of the vampire Lucy but in the defeat of Dracula more generally. Seward is, of course, 'in quite a mix up' over the whole affair; his geographical confusion is symbolic of his mental bewilderment.

Harker's fear that Dracula intends to take over London gains credence as the extent of his plan becomes clear, following the discovery of two further addresses in the East End. The vampire plans to colonise London from all four corners:

> If then the Count meant to scatter these ghastly refuges of his over London, these places were chosen as the first of delivery, so that later he might distribute more fully. The systematic manner in which this was done made me think that he could not mean to confine himself to two sides of London. He was now fixed on the far east of the northern shore, on the east of the southern shore, and on the south. The north and west were surely never meant to be left out of his diabolical scheme -- let alone the City itself and the very heart of fashionable London and the south-west and west. (p.314)

Although his method is one of infiltration as opposed to confrontation, this 'systematic manner' recalls a warrior-like strategy in planning billets or supplies in advance. The anxiety of reverse colonisation is symbolised by the way in which Dracula actually brings earth with him. Dracula pollutes his victim and damages the social body in so doing. At the same time, this association with earth suggests a symbolic contamination of London itself, reinforced by Van Helsing's claim that the men must 'sterilise the earth' (p.293). London must be purified. 'Scatter' is the key word in the description above. Dispersal is the source of Dracula's strength. The reverse is true of his opponents. After the apparent death of Lucy, Seward sorrowfully reflects: 'And now we are all scattered; and for many a long day loneliness will sit over our roofs with brooding wings' (p.220). He conceives of isolation in curiously vampiric terms but the point is that they must reassemble before Dracula's enterprise can be thoroughly defeated. Indeed, an analogy can be made between the group and the text itself. Dracula is empowered for a long period as the text remains in a fragmented condition: but once Mina puts it together and an image of the multiplicitous vampire coheres, then the balance of power starts to shift. Harker's fear of colonisation does not come close to being realised. In fact, Dracula is singularly unsuccessful. Even his

infamous boast to the men that 'Your girls that you all love are mine already' is misplaced, given that the vampire Lucy has been destroyed already (p.306). Though more credible perhaps than Frankenstein's excuse for destroying the female creature because 'a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth', the fear seems excessive in hindsight, particularly when the frequent incompetence of the victors is also taken into account (p.138). As Van Helsing boasts, 'This very creature that we pursue, he take hundred of years to get so afar as London; and yet in one day, when we know of the disposal of him we drive him out' (p.374).

# Chapter 5

## The Hypnotic Power of the Gaze: *Dracula*

> Escape them I could not, while, as I endeavoured to meet them, it was as if I shrivelled into nothingness. Never before had I realized what was meant by the power of the eye. They held me enchained, helpless, spell-bound. I felt that they could do with me as they would; and they did. (*The Beetle*, p.54)

### Introduction

In this chapter I consider the hypnotic power of the gaze in *Dracula*, with additional reference to *Trilby* and *The Beetle*. All three novels feature ethnically alien villains, who cross from East to West and use their power to control their respective victims like the puppet-master manipulates his marionettes, for various dark purposes: in the process, the novels tap into the sexual and criminal anxieties that surrounded the figure of the mesmerist and hypnotist in the mind of the Victorian public. As critics have noted, 'Stoker's women have little agency; they are all victims of the count, taken in rape-like encounters over which they have no control'.[1] Dracula infamously forces Mina to suck his blood, which not only establishes a telepathic link between them but renders her subordinate to his will: as she tells Van Helsing, 'I know that when the Count wills me I must go' (p.327). The opening quotation of this chapter refers to the vagrant Robert Holt, who climbs through an inviting open window in the search for shelter but inadvertently enters the lair of the eponymous villain, an Egyptian priestess from the cult of Isis, who has come to London to take revenge upon Paul Lessingham. No sooner is he inside the house than Holt, whose name obviously puns on 'halt', is immobilised by the hypnotic gaze of the Beetle and

[1] Carol Corbin and Robert A. Campbell, 'Postmodern Iconography and Perspective in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'*', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 27: 2 (1992), pp. 40-49 (p. 45).

robbed of his subjectivity. The creature repeatedly violates her entranced victim in the course of the opening narrative and also compels him to burgle Lessingham: as she says, 'you are my slave, – at my beck and call, – my familiar spirit, to do with as I will' (p.62). Holt is powerless to resist but conscious (and therefore able to recall events); indeed, he can more or less think for himself: 'My condition was one of dual personality, – while, physically, I was bound, mentally to a considerable extent, I was free' (p.69). In *Trilby*, the gifted musician Svengali uses his hypnotic power to transform Trilby, a tone deaf artist's model, into an internationally acclaimed singer, La Svengali; a transformation of which she remains unaware on account of her amnesic state of trance.[2] His psychic domination of her is altogether more pervasive. According to Gecko, one of Svengali's disciples, 'He had but to say "*Dors!*" and she suddenly became an unconscious Trilby of marble, who could [...] think his thoughts and wish his wishes – and love him at his bidding'.[3]

The hypnotic power of the villain often prompts a contradictory response in the victim or the concerned onlooker. It horrifies because the subject, possibly unconscious, is incapable of resistance, their actions or feelings utterly dominated – wherein lies a kind of potential consolation: the entranced subject may be violated, or compelled to perform unspeakable acts, but at least they are not responsible. Gecko explains to Trilby's former companions how Svengali forced her to 'love' him: whether it refers to feelings or sexuality, her 'love' was not real, 'just his love for himself turned inside out – *à l'envers* – and reflected back on him, as from a mirror... *un écho, un simulacre*' (p.299). Gilroy, the

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[2] Daniel Pick offers a comprehensive study of the cultural significance of Svengali in *Svengali's Web: The Alien Enchanter in Modern Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000). Also, see Steve Connor's interesting review of Pick's book (first broadcast as Radio 3's *Book of the Month*, 9 March 2000), 'Soul Subtlety', <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/svengali> [last accessed 2 March 2007].

[3] George Du Maurier, *Trilby*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 299. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

victim of the female mesmerist in Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Parasite* (1894) comforts himself with the knowledge that 'these odious [sexual] impulses for which I have blamed myself do not really come from me at all. They are all transferred from her'.[4] As we shall see in the discussion of *Dracula*, the hypnotic power of the vampire exculpates Lucy according to Van Helsing:

> She was bitten by the vampire when she was in a trance, sleepwalking [...] and in trance could he best come to take more blood. In trance she died, and in trance she is Un-Dead, too. So it is that she differ from all other. (p.201).

In each of the above cases, agency is displaced onto the villain: Svengali, Miss Penclosa and Dracula respectively.

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Hyde allows Jekyll to transgress but to deny that he is to blame. According to Jekyll, 'It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty' (p.81). Jekyll is deluded, of course, though one imagines he would have sustained the misapprehension had he been able to keep his two selves apart. The texts under discussion obviously differ to *Jekyll and Hyde* in that self and other are separate. On the surface, at least, hypnotic power means that only the villain is culpable; hence the above-mentioned consolation. However, behind this consolation may lie justification – of the subject's desire. When this is the case, the hypnotist villain who paralyses or enslaves the hapless victim with malevolent intent is only one side of the thematic coin. The other side is the attraction of the subject to the villain, the illicit nature of which means that it must be carefully justified, which it is in terms of being impossible to resist because attraction is hypnotic. The hypnotic encounter is less straightforward than it appears, if not in the example of Holt, mounted by the Beetle in

[4] Quoted in Roger Luckhurst, 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', in *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 148-167 (p. 158). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

her incarnation as monstrous insect, then in the example of Lessingham, mesmerised and enslaved by the Beetle in her incarnation as 'the Woman of Songs' during a youthful adventure in Cairo (p.241). To his horror, he becomes her sexual marionette: 'She did with me as she would, and in dumb agony I endured' (p.243). At the same time, his powerlessness – and his revulsion – is intended to rationalise his attraction to the taboo figure of the Egyptian female. The tension between this idea of the entranced person as a puppet on the one hand and as a desiring subject on the other, informs all three novels but is especially strong in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*.

In anticipation of the discussion of mesmerism and hypnotism to follow, it should also be stated that hypnotic power is not only used for sinister reasons in these novels. The first time Svengali mesmerises Trilby, it is to alleviate her optical neuralgia. Showalter observes in her introduction to *Trilby* how this ability links him to Jean-Martin Charcot, the eminent neurologist who made hypnotism scientifically respectable and used hypnosis in his study of hysteria, and whose death is lamented by Van Helsing in *Dracula* (p.xix). In fact, the Professor seems to be loosely modelled on Charcot. 'I am student of the brain' he reminds Seward at one point and is sufficiently famous for having 'revolutionized therapeutics' for Renfield to have heard of him, though not sufficiently skilled to have cured his own insane wife (p.191, p.244). Van Helsing mesmerises Mina at the end of the novel.[5] In her account of the history of mesmerism in Victorian society in *Mesmerized* (1998), Alison Winter notes how it was commonly understood, 'If mesmerism could transform a conscious individual into a living marionette, still more extraordinary were the

[5] According to Pick, 'The novel sets up a contest of hypnotic powers: the good scientist and the evil vampire compete for the loyalty of the wavering hysterical women' ('"Terrors of the Night": *Dracula* and Degeneration in the Late Nineteenth Century', in *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions* (see Heath, above), pp. 149-65 (p. 155)).

active powers it gave the mesmeric subject, once she slipped deeper into the mesmeric state'.[6] Mina's telepathic link with Dracula means that she can decipher the vampire's thoughts when she is mesmerised. A second personality emerges: 'Mina opened her eyes; but she did not seem the same woman' (p.312). Thus, I would endorse Roger Luckhurst's argument in his article 'Trance-Gothic, 1882-97', that entrancement invokes horror in the Gothic but may also facilitate new subjective states (p.150).

### 5.1. Mesmerism and Hypnotism

When Du Maurier and Marsh refer to the specifically mesmeric power of their villains, they mean to draw on the disreputable associations that were attached to mesmerism, the forerunner to hypnotism that derived its name from Franz Anton Mesmer and which held a central position among the preoccupations of Victorian culture as Winter argues, and which was still of interest at the turn-of-the-century, as is evidenced by its popular literary treatment in *fin-de-siècle* Gothic and mesmeric novels like *Trilby*.[7] Mesmer developed the theory of animal magnetism towards the end of the eighteenth century in order to explain his apparent ability to cure his hysterical patients. He posited the existence of an universal magnetic fluid that the magnetiser could manipulate in order to restore its healthy balance within the patient. The fluid passed from the body of the magnetiser to that of the patient: 'action at a distance' that conflated science (magnetism) and occult thinking (sympathetic magic). As Winter notes, 'People's identities extended beyond the visible

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[6] Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 3. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[7] My discussion of the history of mesmerism and hypnotism draws on the following sources in addition to Pick and Winter: Adam Crabtree, *From Mesmer to Freud: Magnetic Sleep and the Roots of Psychological Healing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), Derek Forrest, *Hypnotism: A History* (London: Penguin, 1999), Alan Gauld, *A History of Hypnotism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and Robin Waterfield, *Hidden Depths: The Story of Hypnosis* (London: Macmillan, 2002).

border of the body, flowing into one another' (p.117). The patient would experience a magnetic crisis, described here by Stoker in his essay on Mesmer in *Famous Impostors* (1910), with reference to the physician's use of a tub for the purpose of group healing:

> To the bath were attached a number of tubes, each of which was held by a patient, who could touch with the end of it any part of his or her body at will. After a while the patients began to get excited, and many of them went into convulsions.[8]

The magnetic crisis was singled out for condemnation in the public report commissioned by Louis XVI, after Mesmer moved his practice from Vienna to Paris.[9] The point is that magnetism was regarded as disreputable from an early stage.

Stoker continues his essay on Mesmer: 'His usual method of producing something of the same effect at private séances, was by holding the hand of the patient, touching the forehead and making "passes" with the open hand' (p.457). Both Svengali and Van Helsing employ mesmeric passes. Trilby stares into Svengali's eyes while he makes 'little passes and counterpasses on her forehead and temples and down her neck and check' (p.45). When Mina instructs Van Helsing to 'hypnotize' her, Harker describes how, 'Looking fixedly at her, he commenced to make passes in front of her, from the top of her head downward, with each hand in turn', which seems odd, both in light of the preceding reference to hypnotism and in light of the Professor's association with Charcot, although it should not be assumed that there was always a clear-cut distinction between the practice of Charcot and Mesmer (p.311, p.312). Anne Harrington makes the point that 'Charcot and his doctors at Salpêtrière spent much of their time placing patients in trance and using magnets to

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[8] Bram Stoker, (from) *Famous Impostors*, in Glennis Byron (ed.), *Dracula* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 1998), pp. 456-458 (p. 456). All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[9] J. M. Charcot, 'Hypnotism and Crime' *Forum* 9 (1890), pp. 159-168 (p. 159). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

'transfer' symptoms from one side of the body to another, and even to carry symptoms from one *patient* to another. These were old mesmeric displays' (quoted in Luckhurst, p.152). Clive Leatherdale suggests with reference to Van Helsing's use of passes that, 'As Stoker knew the differences between hypnosis and mesmerism, one suspects that he purposefully imbues Van Helsing with magical rather than medical qualities' (p.426). Yet the references to hypnotism are insistent, from Mina's 'hypnotic messages' to the Professor's effort at one point 'to hypnotise through her sleep' (p.345, p.368). Leatherdale notes an echo between Mina and Valdemar in this last instance and Poe's tale shall be considered in more detail shortly. The point about Van Helsing's evident hybrid practice is that Stoker intends him to come across as both up-to-date and in touch with the old ways: the occult-scientist that is required to defeat the vampire. The mesmeric passes are problematic from another point of view. As we shall see with reference to Thomas Wakley, they came to be regarded as sexually suspect. Not that there is any suggestion of sexual impropriety when Van Helsing mesmerises or hypnotises Mina, although there are hints of lechery elsewhere; his age certainly does not make him immune to what he refers to as the 'charm' of Lucy, nor for that matter the hypnotic seduction of the vampire women (p.114). It is significant that Van Helsing does not touch Mina. By way of contrast, Trilby will be 'haunted by the memory of Svengali's big eyes and the touch of his soft, dirty fingertips on her face' (p.53).

A disciple of Mesmer, the Marquis de Puységur understood mesmeric influence in terms of the operator's will. He also discovered an alternative form of magnetic crisis: rather than suffer convulsions, the patient entered into a state of deep trance he named 'somnambulism', in which they carried out his commands. However, relevant to the debate

on hypnotism and crime towards the end of the nineteenth century, the context in which the *hypnotist villain in fin-de-siècle fiction is to be understood*, Puységur considered that 'the somnambule was not absolutely a mere automaton, but had an individuality of his own capable of withstanding suggestions of a certain class'; that is to say, suggestions which he would not consent to when awake (Charcot, p.160).

Mesmerism swept Britain in the 1840s, by when 'most Victorians would have had some idea of what went on in a mesmeric séance' (Winter, p.2). Stoker depicts his idea of a mesmeric séance, 'a curious and not altogether pleasant experience', in distinctly Gothic terms:

> The whole surroundings of the place together with the previously cultured belief; the dusk and mystery; [...] the spasmodic snapping of the cords of tensity which took away all traces of reserve or reticence from the men and women present; the vague terror of the unknown, that mysterious apprehension which is so potent with the nerves of weak or imaginative people; and it may be, the slipping of the dogs of conscience – all these combined to wreck the moral and mental stability of those present, most of whom it must be remembered were actually ill, or imagined themselves to be so, which came practically to the same thing. (Byron, p.457)

At the centre of this insalubrious spectacle, with its suggestion of sexual impropriety, was the seemingly powerful figure of 'the calm, self-reliant operator', around whom anxieties quickly grew (Byron, p.457). In late eighteenth-century Paris concerns were voiced that the female subject was vulnerable to sexual assault when magnetised or during the crisis (Charcot, p.159). Such concerns attended the practice of mesmerism in Victorian Britain. 'In the public mind', according to Fred Kaplan, 'potential sexual power and exploitation were implicit in the relationship between the operator and his subject, between the strong-willed male and the potentially hysterical female'.[10] As we shall see, these sexual anxieties

[10] Fred Kaplan. *Dickens and Mesmerism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 35.

recur at the *fin-de-siècle* in relation to hypnotism, and clearly inform the texts under discussion.

Mesmerism was also perceived by some sceptical observers as a screen for seduction. Thomas Wakley, founder and initial editor of the *Lancet*, was a vigorous opponent of mesmerism which he regarded as quackery. Winter describes how:

> Wakley relayed to English readers an alarming report that was going the rounds of the French press. A mesmerist has placed the young daughter of a wealthy French banker in a 'profound sleep', whereupon 'the quack stole her honour'. Wakley did not believe that the young woman in question really had been placed in an altered state of mind. That was not where mesmerism's dangers lay. Rather, mesmerism was a ruse. It gave 'young and sanguine girls' the most dangerous of temptations, especially those 'nervous and impressionable females' who were said to be most susceptible to the imaginary influence. It invited them to pretend to succumb to the (pretended) power of the mesmerist, but in reality, to use the contemporary parlance for seduction, to place themselves in the (real) 'power' of an unscrupulous lover. Mesmerists' 'passes' were really pleasures, '*indecent assaults*' on the body that were allowed because neither party acknowledged the erotic purpose. (p.101)

This episode may date back to 1838 but it is instructive nonetheless for our understanding of certain aspects of *fin-de-siècle* texts like *Trilby*. Svengali's mesmeric power may be authentic. However, the ease with which his first pupil, Honorine, succumbs to his gaze ('she straightaway mentally prostrated herself'), bearing in mind her misogynist nickname 'Mimi la Salope', is clearly intended to raise question marks about the nature of the spectacle (p.44). Trilby, too, we are told, 'had a singularly impressionable nature, as was shown by her quick and ready susceptibility to Svengali's hypnotic influence' (p.53). In the light of Wakley's above remarks, 'impressionable' sounds like a euphemism. The words 'quick and ready' are also clearly ambiguous. They refer to her swift hypnosis, enough to raise the suspicions of the reader perhaps, but also hint at a complicit eagerness (Thurschwell identifies Trilby in terms of the fallen woman and suggest that she 'seems

vulnerable to the hypnotic effects of Svengali partly because she is a barrier that has already been broken' (p.51)).

The erotic dimension of mesmerism is wholly absent from Poe's short story, 'The Facts in the Case of M Valdemar', published in 1845, which is more concerned with the distinction between life and death. The narrator intends to mesmerise the terminally ill Valdemar on the point of death, with the intention of finding out:

> first, whether in such condition, there existed in the patient any susceptibility to the magnetic influence; secondly, whether, if any existed, it was impaired or increased by the condition; thirdly, to what extent, or for how long a period, the encroachments of death might be arrested by the process. (p.96)

When that moment comes, he appears to succeed in putting him into a trance but not in halting his death. In response to the narrator's question, Valdemar replies that he is asleep and dying; indeed, he seems to die. However, this is contradicted by his paradoxical confirmation of his own death: 'I *have been sleeping* – and now – now *I am dead*' (p.101). Like the entranced Valdemar, the 'undead' vampire also confounds life and death (the vampire Lucy is both undead and hypnotised according to Van Helsing). One of the horrors of this story is that Valdemar is left for seven months in this doubly liminal state, mesmerised so as to be suspended between life and death. This is superseded by the spectacle of his accelerated physical dissolution upon being woken:

> his whole frame at once – within the space of a single minute, or less, shrunk – crumbled – absolutely *rotted* away beneath my hands. Upon the bed, before the whole company, there lay a nearly liquid mass of loathsome – of detestable putrescence. (p.103)

At the end of *Dracula*, the body of the Count also disintegrates when he is killed by Harker and Morris, albeit without this emphasis upon the putrid. Mina describes how 'before our very eyes, [...] the whole body crumbled into dust and passed from our sight' (p.377). It is

fitting that the shape-changing vampire should perform one final transformation. Poe's story is not only concerned with the limits of consciousness and the distinction between life and death, but between the boundary between fact and fiction. No sooner has the narrative begun than it commences to undermine the authoritative claim of its title, with the narrator's confession to his own limited understanding ('the *facts* – as far I comprehend them myself' (p.96)). Furthermore, many readers took the story to be true. As Winter suggests,

> The reception of Poe's story exemplifies the sense of the uncanny that was attached to representations of altered states of mind, leading them time and again to be associated with 'death in life'. Readers were willing to consider the possibility that mesmerism could redraw the line between life and death. (p.121)

This 'possibility' has become an established literary convention by the turn-of-the-century. Marsh's treatment of the mesmerism theme also questions the limits of mortality. For example, after their initial confrontation, the Beetle puts Holt into a deep trance over night. He is conscious but utterly incapacitated:

> Paradoxical though it may sound, I felt as a man might feel who had actually died, – as, in moments of speculation, in the days gone by, I had imagined it as quite possible that he would feel. It is very far from certain that feeling necessarily expires with what we call life. I continually asked myself if I could be dead. (pp.56-57)

The Beetle brings him back to life the following day. Of course, mesmerism does not confound life and death here; death is a metaphor for the depth of Holt's trance.

Continuing with our history of mesmerism and hypnotism, the surgeon James Braid coined the term 'hypnotism' in 1843. He argued that the trance was not an effect of the operator, physical or psychological, but was induced through the fixed stare of the willing subject. As Thurschwell writes, 'Braid attempted to replace mesmerism's eroticized power

dynamic with an element of individual choice – a trance state could not be forced on someone' (p.140). Furthermore, his explanation of mesmerism meant that there was no need for the sexually suspect passes. If one applies the idea that the subject could not be hypnotised against their will to the novels under discussion, it reduces the sexual power of the villain and increases the collusion of the victim. In *Dracula*, Harker attests to the hypnotic power of the vampire women on an occasion subsequent to their dreamlike encounter. The fact that he is able to resist and run away seems to confirm his previous complicity.

Half way through *Dracula*, Van Helsing lectures Seward on the limitations of his scientific outlook, questioning him on the intellectual possibilities (more or less an inventory of the vampire's powers) he is prepared to accept:

> 'Ah, it is the fault of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new; and which are yet but the old, which pretend to be young – like the fine ladies at the opera. I suppose now you do not believe in corporeal transference. No? Nor in materialization. No? Nor in astral bodies. No? Nor in the reading of thought. No? Nor in hypnotism–' (p.191)

Seward interrupts him on the mention of hypnotism: 'Charcot has proved that pretty well' (p.191). Certainly, Charcot was the major force in the establishment of hypnotism as a legitimate subject of scientific study by the penultimate decade of the century.[11] Stoker draws on his identification of three stages of hypnosis in hysterical patients – cataleptic, lethargic and somnambulistic – in *Dracula*, as Luckhurst notes with reference to the

[11] According to Forrest, 'In a count of relevant European publications during the decades from 1840 to 1880 an average of less than 30 publications per decade is obtained; during the 1880s, 1030 publications appeared. Without attributing this huge increase solely to Charcot's influence, there is no doubt that his great prestige triggered a change in professional attitudes and in scientific concern' (p. 228).

Count's initial attack on Mina (p.162).[12] That said, were Van Helsing to examine the entranced woman, he would come to a similar conclusion to the doctor in *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903) when he examines the comatose Trelawny: 'his unconsciousness does not resemble any of the many cases of hypnotic sleep which I saw in the Charcot Hospital in Paris'.[13] In other words, Stoker's thematic treatment of Charcot in *Dracula* divorces the man, on whose reputation the writer plays, from his ideas, which he Gothicises.

Sigmund Freud, who worked under Charcot at the Salpêtrière in the mid-1880s, describes a powerfully charismatic individual in his obituary of him, referring to 'the magic that emanated from his looks and from his voice' and the fact that 'Charcot was positively fascinating'.[14] Stoker also attributes a (metaphoric) mesmeric quality to Henry Irving, when the young man is treated to a private recital: 'So great was the magnetism of his genius, so profound was the sense of his dominancy that I sat spellbound'.[15] Lord Henry's social performance at Lady Agatha's has a similar effect upon the 'spellbound' Dorian, while Dorian exerts a powerful influence over his peers. In other words, although our discussion is focused upon the hypnotic power of the gaze, it is important to bear in mind those individuals in *fin-de-siècle* writing, who are not equipped with hypnotic power but are powerfully charismatic nonetheless. Indeed, Du Maurier counterbalances Svengali's malign hypnotic power with the allure – sexual but non-threatening – of the eponymous heroine:

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[12] Leonard Wolf points out that Mina goes straight into the somnambulistic state under Van Helsing in *The Essential Dracula* (London: Plume, 1993), p. 235.
[13] Bram Stoker, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 25.
[14] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey and others, Volume 3 of 24 (London: Hogarth, 1953-74), pp. 16-17. All further references will be given in the body of the text.
[15] Bram Stoker quoted in Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1996), p. 73. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

> she was one of those rarely gifted beings who cannot look or speak or even stir without waking up (and satisfying) some vague longing [...]; grace, charm, magnetism – whatever the nameless seduction should be called that she possessed to such an usual degree. (p.261)

In *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow is drawn towards Kurtz, as surely as Kurtz is drawn towards the jungle. According to the journalist Marlow meets at the end of the novel, Kurtz's charisma meant that he would have made an intoxicating politician or firebrand: 'how that man could talk. He electrified large meetings. [...] He would have made a splendid leader of an extreme party' (p.244).

In addition to its scientific respectability, what were the other characteristics of hypnotism at the turn-of-the-century? Hypnotism may not have had the popular appeal of mesmerism in the 1840s but there was extensive interest nonetheless. In France, 'Strictly technical works on hypnotism and suggestion run through edition after edition', according to Nordau: 'Novels have, with rare exceptions, no longer any sale [...], so that sagacious publishers give their discouraged authors this advice: "Leave novels for a time, and write on magnetism"' (p.216). Stephanie Moss comments that the considerable interest in hypnotism in *fin-de-siècle* Britain is indicated by the volume of periodical material, and points to the public demonstrations in which 'theatrical replications of Charcot's demonstrations put hysterical illness on display'.[16] In fact, while hypnotism was becoming scientifically respectable, various peripatetic stage hypnotists were helping to give the practice a less reputable name, as Daniel Pick has noted.[17]

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[16] Stephanie Moss, 'The Psychiatrist's Couch: Hypnosis, Hysteria, and Proto-Freudian Performance in *Dracula*', in *Bram Stoker's Dracula: Sucking Through the Century, 1897-1997*, ed. by Carol Margaret Davison (Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1997), pp. 123-46 (p. 126). Moss notes that '*Poole's Index* lists 64 entries under the subject heading of "hypnosis" between the years 1887 and 1896' (p. 127).

[17] 'This is the period indeed that sees the reappearance of the great hypnotists: Charcot *and* Donato, stage-name of the a former Belgian naval officer, D'Hont, who causes sensation and scandal as he tours the European theatres, provoking furious debate on the very legality of the public spectacle of magnetism and

One of the reasons why mesmerism and hypnotism fell into disrepute in the mid-to-late nineteenth century was because of its association with spiritualism, an asssociation that continues into the final decades. Occult phenomena are even validated on the back of Charcot according to an incredulous Nordau, whose aforementioned comment on the popularity of hypnotism is to be found in a tirade on spiritualism. He goes on to mention recent publications on the occult that include hypnotism and continues:

> This has brought many observers to the idea that the works and discoveries of the Charcot school in general have given the impulse to the whole of this movement. Hypnotism, say the representatives of this opinion, has brought such remarkable facts to light that the accuracy of certain traditions, popular beliefs and old records can no longer be doubted, though hitherto they have been generally considered inventions of superstition; possession, witch-spells, second-sight, healing by imposition of hands, prophecy, mental communication at the remotest distance without the intervention of words, have received a new interpretation and have been recognised as possible. (p.217)

The contested understanding of hypnotism at the turn-of-the-century is reflected in the thematic treatment of hypnotism in *Dracula*. On the one hand, it is the one idea that the modern scientist like Seward is prepared to accept: on the other hand, it is a supernatural power of the vampire.[18] It would be easy to imagine Van Helsing, for whom there is only a temporal distinction between science and the occult because the latter is the science of the future, making the above claims for hypnotism. Although he does not, he does employ hypnotism rhetorically as a conceptual gateway between science and the occult in his response to Seward's affirmation of his belief in hypnotism:

> 'Then you are satisfied as to it. Yes? And of course then you understand how it act, and can follow the mind of the great Charcot – alas that he is no more! – into the very soul of the patient that he influence. No?' (p.191)

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hypnotism. [....] Certainly Dracula too is cast as a form of hypnotist on the stage of Europe, part fake, part genius' (Pick, 1996, p. 155).

[18] Hurley makes a similar point (p. 20).

If not, argues Van Helsing, it is illogical to recognise hypnotism, imperfectly understood as it is, 'and reject the thought-reading' – and by extension, the other ideas, which implicitly include vampirism (p.191). He exploits the gaps in the understanding of hypnotism, not unlike those degenerates who make supernatural claims for the phenomena of hypnosis. 'Many processes of hypnosis are more or less satisfactorily explained; others as yet not at all', writes Nordau: 'But an earnest and healthy mind attaches no great importance to this' (p.217). Van Helsing's argument also depends upon a good degree of mystification. Hypnotism was better understood than he suggests and Charcot would have been unlikely to refer to the 'soul' of his patient. The crucial context for understanding the *fin-de-siècle* hypnotist villain is the late nineteenth-century debate on hypnotism and crime, which was itself informed by the arguments that raged between Paris and Nancy. Charcot bracketed off hypnosis with hysteria, which he regarded as a form of degeneracy. Hippolyte Bernheim explained hypnosis in terms of the power of suggestion: and not only was anybody potentially susceptible, but the power was absolute. As Robin Waterfield notes, 'a hypnotized person might as well be an automaton – a tool without will'.[19] Luckhurst makes the point that one of the major difficulties in providing a late nineteenth-century history of hypnosis is that 'the "new" phenomena catalogued by researchers often repeated those of 1840s mesmerists' (p.150). Given this repetition, it is not surprising perhaps that the anxieties formerly attached to mesmerism resurfaced in relation to hypnosis. Certainly, the notion of the puppet-like state of the mesmeric subject continued to haunt hypnosis. The fear was that the entranced subject could be compelled to behave against their conscience, in an immoral or illegal way. It is articulated by Du Maurier. When Svengali first

[19] Robin Waterfield, *Hidden Depths: The Story of Hypnosis* (London: Macmillan, 2002), p. 223.

mesmerises Trilby, he cannot resist demonstrating his power over her, which he does in collusion with the spectator, Sandy. Prompted by Svengali, Sandy commands Trilby to open her eyes, to speak and to rise from the couch respectively, but the young woman is unable to move a muscle, until she is released from the trance by the musician. Sandy subsequently warns Trilby of the dangers of the rogue hypnotist: 'They get you into their power, and just make you do any blessed thing they please – lie, murder, steal – anything! And kill yourself into the bargain when they've done with you! It's just too terrible to think of!' (p.52). Charcot argued that the entranced subject could withstand the power of suggestion in such circumstances but also acknowledged that,

> rape and attempts to rape are the crimes that are oftenest committed upon hypnotized persons. That this should be so is readily seen, for the in the lethargy especially, [...] the subject is, so to speak, so much lifeless matter offered to the lechery of the magnetizer. (pp.161-62)

This reintroduces the sexual element of mesmerism previously banished as it were by science.

## 5.2. *Trilby*

### 5.2.1. The Hypnotist Svengali

Sandy does not specifically mention the sexual menace of the hypnotist but it is implicit in his reference to 'anything' in the above quotation and informs Svengali's romantic pursuit of Trilby, who tells Sandy later that day, 'He reminds me of a big hungry spider, and makes me feel like a fly!' (p.52). She is effectively immobilised by Svengali's web-like gaze in the mesmerism scene, pointing to her physical vulnerability were she alone with him. On another occasion, the narrator likens him to 'a cat with a mouse – a weird, ungainly cat, and most unclean; a sticky, haunting, long, lean, uncanny, black spider-

cat, if there is such an animal outside a bad dream' (p.73). The cat and mouse metaphor reinforces the idea of his predatory threat. The image of the 'spider-cat' encodes sexual, and, as we shall see, racial horror as arising from an alien species, if not from the realms of nightmare; indeed, the reader is subsequently told how, 'He seemed to her a dread powerful demon, who [...] oppressed and weighed on her like an incubus' (p.93). The demonic incubus is supposed to visit his female victim in her sleep – 'so much lifeless matter' – and have sexual intercourse with her. The reference offers itself as a veiled image of the mesmerist, who threatens to ravish his subject in her mesmeric sleep. The reference also brings to mind Henry Fuseli's *The Nightmare* (1782), which depicts an incubus sitting on the stomach of a supine young woman.[20] Sleep is frequently equated with insecurity of one form or another in the Gothic. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, for example, Jekyll comes to fear sleep towards the end of his narrative, when he automatically changes into Hyde whenever he falls asleep. This vulnerability of the sleeping subject is highlighted by Laura in Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' from *In A Glass Darkly* (1872):

> The precautions of nervous people are infectious, and persons of a like temperament are pretty sure, after a time, to imitate them. I had adopted Carmilla's habit of locking her bedroom door, having taken into my head all her whimsical alarms about midnight invaders and prowling assassins. [...] Thus fortified I might take my rest in peace. But dreams come through stone walls, lighten up dark rooms, or darken light ones, and their persons make their exits and their entrances as they please, and laugh at locksmiths.[21]

'Dreams' is an euphemism for vampirism, as it is in *Dracula*. The vampire Carmilla locks her door at night so that her nightly wanderings will not be noticed. Laura inadvertently facilitates the vampire's predation by locking her own door, thus securing herself within her

[20] For a brief discussion of *The Nightmare* see Davenport-Hines, 1998, pp. 235-8.
[21] J. Sheridan Le Fanu, 'Carmilla', *In a Glass Darkly* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990), p. 274. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

room but paradoxically preventing the interruption of predation or the possibility for flight. Locked doors offer no protection from Dracula either. The vampire enters the Harkers' bedroom in the asylum in the form of a mist 'through the joinings of the door' (p.259). After the sleepwalking episode, Mina locks the bedroom door and ties the key to her wrist in order to prevent Lucy getting out. The thwarted vampire makes the hypnotised Lucy open the bedroom window instead, feeding on her at the threshold in the form of a bat (p.259). Like Jekyll, Lucy also comes to fear sleep. Her efforts to resist it are noticed at one point by Seward, who watches over the ill woman:

> 'You do not want to go to sleep?'
> 'No; I am afraid.'
> 'Afraid to go to sleep! Why so? It's the boon we all crave for.'
> 'Ah, not if you were like me – if sleep was to you a presage of horror!' (p.125)

His vigilant gaze ensures that Lucy sleeps safely but his absence from the room the following night results in another tableau that draws on *The Nightmare*. The two doctors find Lucy 'on the bed, seemingly in a swoon' and in need of a second blood transfusion (p.127).

Returning to *Trilby*, Showalter cautions the reader against viewing Trilby as 'Svengali's victim, and that he is the dark satanic force who takes over her spirit', reasoning that she is already 'an empty shell' when he takes her in (p.xvii). This would not mitigate his exploitation of her body for his own self-aggrandisement. Moreover, it rather downplays the *frisson* that the conclusion of the novel works to generate, in terms of the disclosure of Svengali's hypnotic domination of Trilby:

> 'But all at once – [...] with one wave of his hand over her – with one look of his eyes – with a word – Svengali could turn her into the other Trilby, *his* Trilby – and make her do whatever he liked... you might have run a red-hot needle into her and she would not have felt it.' (p.298)

Winter explains that one of the ways in which the showman mesmerist would try to convince his audience as to the authentic nature of the spectacle was through his demonstration of the entranced subject's absence of sensation (p.112). The reference to 'a red-hot needle' which follows the description of the helpless Trilby is clearly intended to evoke Svengali's sexual threat nonetheless.[22] Yet the suggestion that 'Svengali is simply the mesmeric and invasive monster who steals her soul' is too simplistic perhaps (Thurschwell, p.52). To return briefly to *The Nightmare*, the painting is characterised by its ambivalence; it is very difficult to unpick its themes of sexual power and desire, to determine to what extent the presence of the creature, whether real or imagined, is desired – not unlike the relationship between the hypnotist villain and his victim in the texts under discussion.[23] The reader can take, probably ought to take, the hypnotic power of Svengali and the disgust he arouses at face value, but they can also be understood in terms of the justification of the female's attraction to this taboo figure.

Other readings of the issue of power are also possible. Some critics have gone so far as to suggest that Trilby is the true potent force of the novel.[24] In his review (originally written for broadcast) of *Svengali's Web* (2000) – Pick's study of the cultural significance of Svengali – Steve Connor makes the more modest suggestion that Trilby has her own

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[22] In her article 'The Infamous Svengali: George Du Maurier's Satanic Jew', Ruth Anolik suggests that 'Svengali's eventual appropriation of Trilby is, in addition to the more explicit demonic possession that dominates the narrative, certainly sexual – she becomes his mistress although he refuses to marry her' (*The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination* ed. by Ruth Bienstock Anolik and Douglas L Howard (London: McFarland, 2000), pp. 163-193 (p. 168).

[23] Philip Martin suggests 'bliss rather than distress' in his article 'Nightmare', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. by Marie Mulvey-Roberts (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 164-5 (p. 164).

[24] According to Nina Auerbach, the reader of *Trilby* and *Dracula* is 'struck by the kinds of powers that are granted to the women: the victim of paralysis possesses seemingly infinite capacities of regenerative being that turn on her triumphant mesmerizer and paralyze him in turn. Dispossessed and seemingly empty, the women reveal an infinitely unfolding magic that is quite different from the formulaic spells of the men' (*Women and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 17).

'web of hysterics, trance-speakers, mediums, addicts and visionary outsiders, whose power lies in their capacity to be overtaken by power'.[25] The relationship of power between the subject and the operator is perhaps not quite so black and white in the light of this observation. Interestingly, Connor argues in favour of the masochistic appeal of *Trilby*; that the power of Svengali is less desirable than the powerlessness of Trilby, which appeals to the wish to be overtaken by power and to be liberated from the burdensome nature of desire itself in the process. In such a scenario, the puppet invests the puppet-master with power – one of the suggestions behind the image of Hyde in Utterson's dream in *Jekyll and Hyde*. According to the narrator:

> he would see a room in a rich house, where his friend lay asleep, dreaming and smiling at his dreams; and then the door of that room would be opened, the curtains of the bed plucked apart, the sleeper recalled, and lo! There would stand by his side a figure to whom power was given, and even at that dead hour, he must rise and do its bidding. (p.39)

The scene echoes *Frankenstein* when the creature climbs through the bedroom window and wakes Victor, who recalls how, 'He held up the curtain of the bed; and his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me' (pp.39-40). The creature has no power to detain him; Victor eludes his grasp and runs away. In this respect, the imaginary Hyde bears closer resemblance to Dracula, whose violation of private spatial limits and the puppet-like state of his victims attest to his sexual power; indeed, Hendershot identifies Hyde here in terms of the 'evil hypnotist' (p.108). However, the idea that he is 'a figure to whom power was given' is suitably ambiguous. The lawyer's dream reads in part like a sadomasochistic homoerotic fantasy in which Hyde's power is bequeathed.

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[25] Steve Connor, 'Soul Subtlety', (2000) <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/english/skc/svengali> [accessed 2 March 2007] (para. 11).

### 5.2.2. The Projective Power of the Gaze

Returning to the figure of Svengali, it is not only its mesmeric power that distinguishes his gaze. When Trilby lets out a booming cry after she has been cured of her neuralgia, he asks permission to inspect the inside of her mouth, which he describes in a medley of metaphors. As Mary Russo notes, 'His running description suggests something between a Victorian medical examination of an hysteric [...] and the inspection of an architectural engineer'.[26] His rhapsodic gaze sweeps through her capacious interior:

> 'Himmel! The roof of your mouth is like the dome of the Pantheon, there is room in it for "toutes les glories de la France", and a little to spare! The entrance to your throat is like the middle porch of St Sulpice when the doors are open for the faithful on All Saints' Day; and not one tooth is missing – thirty-two British teeth as white as milk and as big as knuckle-bones! And your little tongue is scooped out like the leaf of a pink peony, and the bridge of your nose is like the belly of a Stradivarius – what a sounding-board! And inside your beautiful big chest the lungs that are made of leather! And your breath, it embalms – like the breath of a beautiful white heifer fed on the buttercups and daisies of the Vaterland! And you have a quick, soft, susceptible heart, a heart of gold, matemoiselle – all that sees itself in your face!' (pp.50-51)

The violin metaphor is especially apt because Svengali will use his mesmeric power to transform Trilby into his musical instrument, 'a flexible flageolet of flesh and blood' that he will play in the concert halls across Europe (p.299). This is the first of three fantasies from Svengali that focus on the body of Trilby and become increasingly sinister as she ignores his romantic overtures. On another occasion, Trilby is vacantly staring out of the window instead of listening to him. Svengali redirects her gaze across the river towards the morgue, where she will find herself he suggests, should she continue to refuse his advances, after having sunk into poverty and anonymity. He makes an erotic spectacle of her semi-naked and decomposing corpse:

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[26] Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 149.

> 'There is a little ugly grey building there, and inside are eight slabs of brass, all of a row, like beds in a school dormitory, and one fine day you shall lie asleep on one of those slabs – [...] And over the middle of you will be a little leather apron, and over your head a little brass tap, and all day long and all night the cold water shall trickle, trickle, trickle, trickle all the way down your beautiful white body to your beautiful white feet till they turn green, and your poor damp,
>
> drip, drip, drip!' (p.75)

The Morgue had become an immensely popular tourist attraction by the time *Trilby* was written. According to Barbara Belford, Stoker and Irving were among the visitors whenever they were in Paris and the actor 'scrutinized the incoming victims, concocting tales of horror to account for the facial expressions' (p.179). In *Spectacular Realities*, Schwartz describes public visits to the Morgue in terms of '*flânerie* in the service of the state' (p.45). As she explains elsewhere:

> In a time of increasingly private and commercial entertainment, the Morgue was open and free, and the display of dead bodies existed for the public to come and see. As a municipal institution, however, the Morgue's principal goal was to serve as a depository for the anonymous dead, whose identity, administrators hoped, might be established by their being publicly displayed.[27]

As the scene unfolds, Trilby's corpse is exposed to the indiscriminate gaze of the public, who gape through the glass-window. Finally, the wealthy Svengali arrives, mocking the dead woman for having paid no attention to him. In the final fantasy, it is no longer her corpse but her 'beautiful skeleton' that is on display and which Svengali comes to inspect. As Richard Kelly notes, 'In the morgue scenario, Svengali undresses Trilby to reveal the pointless waste of her fine white flesh. But here, in the museum scenario, he unfleshes her with his eyes':

> 'You shall have a nice little mahogany glass case all to yourself in the museum of the École de Médicine, and Svengali shall come [...] and look through the

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[27] Vanessa R. Schwartz, 'Cinematic Spectatorship before the Apparatus: The Public Taste for Reality in *Fin-de-Siècle* Paris, in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (see Ben Singer, above), pp. 297-319 (p. 299).

> holes of your eyes into your stupid empty skull, and up the nostrils of your high, bony-sounding board of a nose without either a tip or a lip to it, and into the roof of your big mouth, with your thirty-two big English teeth, and between your ribs into your big chest, where the big leather lungs used to be.'[28] (p.92)

The projective power of his gaze echoes that of the original inspection of her mouth, only now it sweeps through her barren interior.

### 5.2.3. Svengali and Dracula

There are a number of similarities between *Trilby* and *Dracula*.[29] Following the death of Svengali, like the vampirised Lucy, Trilby suffers from some mysterious but clearly terminal disease, one which simultaneously enhances her beauty: 'Day by day she grew more beautiful in their eyes, in spite of her increasing pallor and emaciation – her skin was so pure and white and delicate, and the bones of her face so admirable!' (p.266). The change echoes Trilby's 'strange metamorphosis' earlier in the novel, only then she was changing into a beautiful young woman, whereas now she is dying, having been effectively drained by Svengali (p.91). Significantly, the doctor who attends upon Trilby is not only at a loss to explain 'her strange physical weakness' but decides upon the need for 'consultation with some special authority' (p.263). In *Dracula*, Seward is unable to diagnose Lucy's illness and calls in Van Helsing. There are also a host of smaller details that link the two novels: from the brain fever suffered by Little Billee and Harker, to Svengali and Van Helsing's propensity to blaspheme in German. A number of critics have

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[28] Richard Kelly *George Du Maurier* (Boston: Twayne, 1983), p. 95.

[29] According to Belford, 'Both deal with the fear of female sexuality and the loss of innocence, and with brave men who rescue the mother figure from a foreigner's embrace. Trilby O'Ferrall has three suitors, Taffy, Sandy, and Little Billee; Lucy Westenra also has three. The tone-deaf, weak-willed Trilby becomes a great singer when hypnotized, and Lucy becomes voluptuous when bitten. Both books illustrate the male-bonding novels popular in the late 1880s' (p. 228).

noted certain similarities between Svengali and the Count. Nina Auerbach suggests that, 'The master-mesmerist Dracula seems a derivation from Svengali, with his powers still further extended over time and space'.[30] Both men are from Eastern Europe: 'the mysterious East! The poisonous East – birthplace and home of an ill wind that blows nobody good' (Du Maurier, p.282). Svengali is specifically identified as a Jew, while Dracula is described in stereotypically Semitic terms.[31] Svengali's eyes, 'bold, black, beady Jew's eyes', are one of the signs of his ethno-religious identity (p.44). Indeed, the hypnotic quality of the eyes in itself is a sign of cultural otherness in these stories: 'his was one of those morbid organisations which are oftener found, thank goodness, in the east than in the west', states Sydney Atherton following his encounter with the Beetle (p.104). As with Svengali and Dracula, the racial otherness of the Beetle is heavily marked. The creature repeatedly changes shape like the vampire: (s)he/it confounds the distinction between numerous categories, including those of species, gender and sexuality and is next to impossible to classify. By way of contrast, racial identity is relatively stable. Repeatedly referred to as 'the Arab', the simple presence of this foreigner is sufficient to raise the suspicions of the local constabulary, to draw the kind of attention that Dracula in his interview with Harker reveals he is so anxious to avoid. The texts under discussion not only play upon the fear of sexual violation then, but racial defilement. Svengali's dirtiness, which contrasts with the cleanliness of the three Brits, who are to be found in their baths

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[30] Nina Auerbach, *Women and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 16. See also Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 343.

[31] Mina describes Dracula as 'a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard' (p. 172). For a discussion of Dracula's resemblance to the Jew of anti-Semitic discourse, including the visual connection between the vampire and other fictional Jews like Svengali, see Halberstam, pp. 91-9. Anolik argues that the depiction of Svengali as the demonic Jew, who poses the threat of miscegenation, makes *Trilby* a Gothic novel (p. 166).

during the novel, is symbolic of this capacity to pollute. Dracula's personal grooming – the men discover 'a clothes brush, a brush and comb, and a jug and basin' on the dining-room table in Piccadilly (p.301) – sets him apart from the filthy Svengali, with 'his matted black mane', though he is no less capable of repulsing those who come into contact with him (p.47).[32] Furthermore, he is associated with dirt, both in terms of the earth-filled boxes which poison the air of his respective lairs and in his link to vermin, like the rats he conjures to facilitate his escape from Carfax and to tempt Renfield. Even in Dracula's invasion of London there is an echo of Svengali, who boasts how he will go to London, where he will enslave the female aristocracy through the use of his musical talents. The Beetle also comes to the metropolis. Their presence in the capital, real or imagined, taps back into earlier worries about predatory foreign mesmerists prowling the London streets, as well as the xenophobic fears identified in the previous chapter (Winter, pp.20-21). It also taps into contemporary xenophobic fears related to immigration, for example, the perceived threat of degeneration enhanced in some eyes by the influx of Eastern European Jews, and more general anxieties about invasion.[33]

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[32] Harker recalls how, 'As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It many have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal' (p. 18)

[33] According to Pick, 'The novel provided a metaphor for current political and sexual political discourses on morality and society, representing the price of selfish pursuits and criminal depravity. The family and the nation, it seemed to many, were beleaguered by syphilities, alcoholics, cretins, the insane, the feeble-minded, prostitutes and a perceived "alien invasion" of Jews from the East who, in the view of many alarmists, were feeding off and "poisoning" the blood of the Londoner. Significantly, it was an unscrupulous Jew who aided and abetted Dracula's flight form his hunters' (Pick, 1996, pp. 158-159).

## 5.3. *Dracula*

### 5.3.1. The Eye of the Vampire

Superstition has associated the Jew with the evil eye down the centuries.[34] According to Pick, 'The possibility that the hypnotist's ocular domination might somehow relate to the old legend of the evil eye was itself considered in certain esoteric scientific debates' at the turn-of-the-century (Pick, 2000, p.171). In *Dracula*, the way in which the crowd outside the Golden Krone Hotel and the passengers on the coach to the Borgo Pass make the sign to ward off the evil eye, adds to the consternation of Harker, who will shortly discover that his host is the embodiment of it. The eyes are perhaps the most striking physical characteristic of the vampire. One of the first things Harker notices about Dracula (in his guise as the coach driver) is 'the gleam of a pair of very bright eyes, which seemed red in the lamplight' (p.10). They share their colour with the blood that sustains the vampire, as well as the setting sun that marks the restoration of his powers.[35] Their luminescence indicates the animality of this nocturnal predator, who, as Van Helsing warns, 'can see in the dark – no small power this, in a world which is one half shut from light' (p.239). At the same time, his red eyes also help to make him visible in the dark, for example, in the churchyard at Whitby. They also mark him out more generally – the zookeeper refers to his ''ard, cold look and red eye' – which will make his movements easier to trace (p.137). Nonetheless, they are the source of his strength: the hypnotic power with which he controls the elements and the animal kingdom, as well as his female prey.

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[34] See Pick, 2000, pp. 166-187.

[35] See David Seed, 'The Narrative Method of *Dracula*', in *The Vampire and the Critics*, ed. by Margaret L. Carter (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988), pp. 195-206 (p. 198).

Dracula's eyes are not only red but combustible and categorise him as demonic. They recall Milton's Satan; specifically, the description of him as a sea-serpent following his descent into hell, with 'eyes / That sparkling blazed'.[36] Harker describes how 'his eyes blazed with a sort of demoniac fury' at the sight of his own bleeding face (p.26). Here the burning eyes signify the thirst for blood and the sexual desire for which this is a metaphor. On this last point, Belford is surely correct when she asserts with reference to Stoker that 'he was fully aware of the [sexual] subtexts of his horror tale' (p.xiii). This awareness repeatedly manifests in the writing, for example, in terms of the evident sexual coding, the way in which attraction to the taboo figure of the vampire is rationalised in terms of hypnotic power. It is also manifested in its concerted effort to confine the vampire theme within heterosexual limits, which is illogical from the point of view of predation. When Harker sees Dracula shortly after he has fed, 'the whole awful creature [...] simply filled with blood', the obvious threat posed by him is immediately displaced onto the vampire women, despite the fact that he has already made one abortive attack on his guest: 'The coming night might see my own body a banquet in a similar way to those horrid three' (p.51). Dracula's red eyes also light up with evident 'triumph' when Harker withdraws his request to leave the castle immediately, prompted by the sight of the wolves that have been summonsed by Dracula (p.50): and with anger when the vampire women dare to prey upon Harker, whom the Count regards as his possession. Seward describes how the vampire's 'eyes flamed red with devilish passion', after the men have burst into the Harker's bedroom

[36] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2005), p. 15, ll. 193-94. Mario Praz considers the evolution of Satan into the Gothic villain in *The Romantic Agony* (1933) trans. by A. Davidson (London: Collins, 1962), pp. 51-91.

in the asylum, which suggests anger and ardour (p.282). The point is that though the eyes as sign is clear in the novel, signification is slippery and shifting.

The motif of the glittering eye features in the Gothic Romanticism of Coleridge and Byron. In *Christabel* (1816), the vampire Geraldine's 'fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright', after she has vanquished the protective spirit of Christabel's dead mother.[37] Geraldine exerts a powerful influence over the innocent Christabel, who not only invites her into the castle but to share her bed: Christabel wakes from 'her trance' the following morning with feelings of shame and a subsequent vision indicates that she has been violated (p.449, line 312). Paglia notes how 'Geraldine's daemonic aggression resides in her eye' and refers to Harold Bloom's observation as to her hypnotic or mesmeric qualities (p.338). The glittering eye is also a key identifying feature of the Gothic villain. In Mathew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), it is the case with Ambrosio, that 'few could sustain the glance of his eyes at once fiery and penetrating'.[38] One recalls the way in which Moreau dominates the Leopard Man with the use of his powerful eyes, although this description is even more applicable to Dracula, who uses his eyes like weapons on occasions, their blaze equivalent in effect to a physical force of sorts. Harker makes the mistake of having his eyes open, when he attempts to dispatch Dracula with the shovel. He recalls how 'the eyes fell full upon me, with all their blaze of basilisk horror. The sight seemed to paralyse me' (p.52). The basilisk is 'a mythical reptile with a lethal gaze' (*OED*); an appropriate reference in the context and one which reinforces the reptilian associations of the Count, who sidles down the face of the castle 'just as a lizard moves along a wall' (p.34). Harker is effectively stunned by the

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[37] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Christabel', *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (Seventh Edition, Volume Two) (New York and London: Norton, 2000), pp. 441-456 (p. 447, l. 221).
[38] Matthew Lewis (1796), *The Monk*, ed. by Howard Anderson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 18.

returned gaze and the shovel glances off the vampire's forehead. Renfield is similarly defeated three quarters of the way through the novel. He is grappling with Dracula in his cell to try and avert the latest attack on Mina, when the vampire turns his eyes on him: 'They burned into me, and my strength became like water' (p.280). In an echo of the basilisk reference, when the men confront the vampire Lucy outside the tomb, Seward likens her to Medusa, the mythological creature whose face turns the onlooker to stone.[39] She is the embodiment of danger and beauty, with Seward noting ironically, 'If ever a face meant death – if looks could kill – we saw it at that moment' (p.212). The transformation of the dying Lucy into a vampire, the fact that she is becoming like Dracula, is signalled through her alternating eyes. When Arthur comes to visit Lucy on her deathbed, Seward notes how 'she looked her best, with all the angelic beauty of her eyes' (p.160). They indicate Lucy's moral or spiritual purity. She slips into unconsciousness and reawakens, albeit in a trancelike state: 'she opened her eyes, which were now dull and hard at once' (p.161). The eyes now indicate Lucy's pollution, as when Seward gazes at the vampire outside the tomb:

> When Lucy – I call the thing that was before us Lucy because it bore her shape – saw us she drew back with an angry snarl [...]. Then her eyes ranged over us. Lucy's eyes in form and colour; but Lucy's eyes unclean and full of hell-fire, instead of the pure, gentle orbs we knew. At that moment, the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight. (p.211)

Seward's reaction is intended to convey the horror of this spectacle of deadly female beauty, though his own potential reversion is no less remarkable in some ways.

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[39] See Praz, 'The Beauty of Medusa' in *The Romantic Agony* (1962), pp.23-50; and Hurley, pp. 118-119 for further discussion of Medusa: 'the sight of whose hideous head paralyzes the male spectator' (p. 118). Hurley also discusses Freud's 'Medusa's Head' in which he speculates on the castration complex (pp. 145-147).

## 5.4. Harker

### 5.4.1. The Encounter with the Vampire Women

Harker's journal provides the first reference in the novel to the hypnotic power of the vampire over their victim. He is spying on the Count's movements from a castle window when his attention is caught by particles floating in the moonlight: 'I felt myself struggling to awake to some call of my instincts; nay, my very soul was struggling, and my half-remembered sensibilities were striving to answer the call. I was becoming hypnotized!' (p.44). The incident takes place some weeks after the original attempt of the three female vampires to prey upon him, when Harker falls asleep outside his allocated rooms, having disregarded the warning from the Count that 'there are bad dreams for those that sleep unwisely' (p.33). The Count uses 'bad dreams' as a euphemism for vampiric predation, while his hypnotised female victims tend to misapprehend the experience in terms of literally having had 'bad dreams'. Harker seems less sure about the unreality of the encounter with the three females: 'I suppose I must have fallen asleep' he writes, '[yet] I cannot in the least believe it was all sleep' (p.37). It is partly the uncanny nature of the women, the illusory attributes of the vampire, which lend the episode its dreamlike quality: 'I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, for [...] they threw no shadow on the floor' (p.37). He actually pretends to be asleep in the encounter, so that he can gaze surreptitiously at the women. They come and take a closer look at Harker, which allows him to scrutinise them in turn. He even seems to recognise one of them. Gail Griffin suggests that this is a significant moment because 'it is virtually the only one in the novel

which acknowledges the link between the female vampires and some part of the heroes' psychology'.[40] Harker's detachment as observer collapses almost immediately:

> There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing, and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. It is not good to note this down, lest some day it should meet Mina's eyes and cause her pain; but it is the truth. (p.37)

He wants the female vampires, the embodiment of deadly beauty, to 'kiss' him, unaware that they intend to consume him. In other words, he misreads predation in term of sexuality, although their predation is unmistakeably eroticised and can be read as a metaphor for sexuality, as critics have comprehensively explained.[41] This misapprehension is corrected by the sight of the child Dracula feeds to the women at the end of the scene. As Kathleen Spencer notes, 'he now understands who, or rather, *what* the fatally beautiful creatures are, and thus sees them with horror rather than his earlier guilty fascination'.[42] His newfound horror is also a question of self-disgust; at his own attraction towards what turn out to be nonhuman females. Prendick has been caught out in a similar way on the island, 'glancing with a transitory daring into the eyes of some lithe white-swathed figure', only to 'see with a spasmodic revulsion that they had slit-like pupils' (p.84). The spectre of bestiality haunts both novels.

Harker does nothing in his scene other than gaze voyeuristically. He is paralysed by the sexual allure of the women. In his 'memorandum', Van Helsing ruminates on how the

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[40] Gail B. Griffin, '"Your Girls that You all Love are Mine": *Dracula* and the Victorian Male Sexual Imagination', in *The Vampire and the Critics* (see Seed, above), p. 138. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[41] For a discussion of the sexual themes of *Dracula*, see Christopher Bentley, 'The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', Carol L. Fry, 'Fictional Conventions and Sexuality in *Dracula*', Phyllis A. Roth, 'Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*' and Judith Weissman, 'Women and Vampires: *Dracula* as Victorian Novel', all in *The Vampire and the Critics* (see Seed, above).

[42] Kathleen Spencer, 'Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis', *ELH*, 59: 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 197-225 (p. 216). All further references will be given in the body of the text.

sight of the sleeping female vampire alone, 'so full of life and voluptuous beauty' must have challenged the resolve of the potential executioner: 'So he delay, [...] till the mere beauty and the fascination of the wanton Un-Dead have hypnotize him. Then the beautiful eyes of the fair women open and look love, and the voluptuous mouth present to a kiss' (pp.369-370). Van Helsing goes on to confess how even he starts to succumb to the hypnotic allure of the vampire. He pauses almost fatally in his execution of the first female, although the novel makes some effort to mitigate the attraction of the professor, who recalls how, 'I was lapsing into sleep, the open-eyed sleep of one who yields to a sweet fascination', before he is brought back round by the sound of Mina's wailing voice (p.370). Van Helsing has previously saved Holmwood from the alluring vampire who shares and eroticises Lucy's deathbed. Holmwood responds 'eagerly' to the dying request for a deadly kiss, showing an enthusiasm clearly at odds with the circumstances, but Van Helsing intervenes in the nick of time, just as Dracula does with Harker (p.161). The vampire Lucy similarly beckons to Holmwood outside the tomb. According to Seward, 'he seemed under a spell' and he opens his arms to embrace Lucy before Van Helsing intervenes once more (p.212). 'Seemed' is ambiguous. Indeed, the fact that Harker is paralysed by the allure of vampires is different to saying they use their hypnotic power on him. The subsequent reference to being hypnotised is perhaps intended to justify his attraction to the taboo females retrospectively, although it simultaneously draws attention to the absence of hypnotic power in the first place. This absence is in marked contrast to the attacks on Lucy and Mina, who tend to be immobilised by the gaze of the vampire: 'I tried to stir, but there was some spell upon me', records Lucy in her 'memorandum' (p.143). Stoker seems to

grant Harker a voluntary passivity, tantamount to conscious acquiescence, which would be unthinkable in the case of the women, whose submissiveness is always carefully justified.

The subsequent reference to hypnotism would not be the only attempt at retrospective justification with reference to Harker. For example, when Mina travels to the hospital in Budapest where he is recovering from the brain fever that results from his experiences at the castle, the nurse reassures her as to the nature of her fiancé's ravings, 'that it was not about anything which he had done wrong himself; and you, as his wife to be, have no cause to be concerned' (p.103). The nurse removes the niggling doubts about his fidelity that it now becomes apparent informed her anxiety in Whitby. Her relief is palpable: 'I felt a thrill of joy through me when I *knew* that no other woman was a cause of trouble' (p.104). The nurse may be correct in so far as Harker is a passive figure in an encounter with women who prove to be vampires, unsure whether the episode is dream or reality, but Mina must also be mistaken here. His description of the encounter, his evident attraction to the females, suggests otherwise and his sense of guilt is apparent in his reference to Mina. Having said that, if Mina is deceived, one would expect this to be corrected when she reads the journal, but this is not the case either. She views her husband simply as the victim. The reassurance from the nurse and the reaction of Mina represent a belated effort by Stoker to absolve Harker of the complicity he more or less admits to.

As the previous reference to 'longing' and 'fear' also indicates, Harker's voyeuristic gaze is characterised by its ambivalence:

> I was afraid to raise my eyelids, but looked out and saw perfectly under the lashes. The fair girl went on her knees, and bent over me, fairly gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal [...]. I closed my eyes in languorous ecstasy and waited -- waited with beating heart. (p.38)

The gaze is one of simultaneous attraction and revulsion: to draw on Miller's discussion of disgust, 'some strange simultaneity, pleasure and aversion augmenting each other in a kind of ecstasy' (p.120). The ambivalence with which Harker views the exaggerated eroticism of the fair vampire, her transgression of codes of gender and sexuality, recalls that of Laura in 'Carmilla'. 'I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger', states Laura with reference to the vampire, Carmilla: 'I did feel, as she said "drawn towards her," but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed' (p.258). Again, when folded in her arms, Laura experiences 'a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust' (p.261). Harker's repulsion is an ironic indication of the strength of his attraction, in that it is evidently strong enough to overcome his repulsion. According to Botting, the ambivalence of Harker 'testifies to the impurity underlying his revulsion; his participation offers an index of attraction beyond the limits of avowed morality, a fascination that persists in the face of horror'.[43] Of course, the fact that the vampire is taboo is part of the attraction. Significantly, Harker has already described the pleasure he takes in disregarding the warning from the Count not to fall asleep outside his allotted rooms. If his disregard for this seemingly minor prohibition is pleasurable, it seems reasonable to assume that the pleasure from succumbing to these taboo female figures will be considerable, regardless of any physical gratification derived from their embrace. These are the desires that 'obtain some of their force from the knowledge that what culture declares forbidden might become desirable for that fact alone' (Miller, p.112). The irony is that moral sense is

[43] Fred Botting, 'Horror', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature* (see Martin above), pp. 123-131 (p. 128).

complicit; it does not prevent transgression, only make it pleasurable before punishing it. As Miller observes:

> So much pleasure is tied up in the violation of rules we are committed to, the very commitment providing the basis for the pleasure in violation. And then we are punished; sometimes by external authority, but most often internally by such painful sentiments as shame, guilt, or disgust. (p.114)

Harker's acknowledgement of his desire to be kissed by the women is immediately followed by his guilt-ridden reference to his fiancé. In other words, there is a subsequent element of self-disgust. Upon reflection he is appalled by the desire the vampire women arouse in him, in part, because it undermines the integrity upon which his sense of self is built; that 'very faithful disposition' identified by his employer, Hawkins, that manifests itself both in public and in private (p.17).

The repulsion of the gaze of both Laura and Harker can also to be understood as a compensatory mechanism. The attraction of their gaze needs to be dampened down because it is transgressive. Harker's attraction to the women is not justified in terms of hypnotic power; that is to say, an attraction that is impossible to resist. They are evidently empowered by his illicit desire. Stoker codes the gaze of attraction with repulsion in order to counterbalance or delimit his response. However, this compensatory mechanism is paradoxical to the extent that 'repulsion' flags up the illicit attraction, for without it there would be no need for the additional coding. Botting suggests that the ambivalence of Harker 'testifies to the impurity underlying revulsion' in the sense that Harker's revulsion is contaminated by his attraction: but in terms of the sexual coding of the scene, the revulsion that is intended to signify Jonathan's purity testifies to the extent of his impurity.

We are familiar with the idea of the ambivalence of repulsion from our discussion of Wells, Stevenson and Wilde. The monstrous sight may repulse the spectator but disgust

also excites curiosity and prompts the refocus of their gaze rather than its disengagement. One only has to recall the scrutiny to which Prendick subjects the Beast Men, to which the men subject Hyde, or Hallward the picture. In *Dracula*, the spectacle of the Count scaling the castle wall upside down repulses Harker; however, he not only continues to look but with a kind of microscopic intensity: 'I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones' (pp.65-66). Harker is disgusted but fascinated: and fascinated because disgusted. If we return to the encounter with the female vampires then, the 'repulsive' quality of the vampire's 'voluptuousness' repulses Harker and attracts him on account of its repulsiveness.

Harker recovers himself after this episode. His desire for the vampire women is suppressed and never articulated again, only his sense of disgust; shorn of fascination, it re-establishes the boundary between self and other. This boundary manifests itself in physical terms. His bedroom in the castle becomes 'a sort of sanctuary, for nothing can be more dreadful than those awful women, who were – who *are* – waiting to suck my blood': not even Dracula himself, whose timely intervention prevents him from being bitten (p.40). 'How dare you touch him, any of you?' he castigates the women: 'How dare you cast eyes on him when I had forbidden it? Back, I tell you all! This man belongs to me!' (p.39). Harker's appearance of youthful masculine virility makes him desirable in the eyes of the female vampires: 'He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all' (p.38). This is an ironic observation given his passive position, both in this scene – he plays the role of the seduced female – and in the castle more generally as the prisoner of the Count. The point, however, is that one may speculate that the prohibition on Harker makes him even more desirable in the eyes of the vampire women, just as Harker originally takes pleasure in

disobeying the warning of the Count. The episode overall involves a double reversal of Harker's male prerogative: first the three female vampires take the active sexual role and then the Count denies his self-autonomy. The captive Harker is not only his possession but his puppet in the sense that the vampire has almost total control over him. The way in which Harker writes letters home under duress, having meekly complied with the Count's order to stay at the castle for an extra month is an early sign of the vampire's capacity to dictate actions. The Count exploits Harker for his legal expertise, though there is also a homoerotic undercurrent to their relationship, which most obviously surfaces in the vampire's aborted attack but is also suggested in the exchange between the Count and the female vampires. They respond to the assertion of his ownership of Harker by questioning his capacity to 'love', an accusation which he denies after an attentive look at the face of the man he has saved: 'Yes, I too can love' (p.39). According to Spencer, Harker 'is rescued from the evils of feminine sexuality only to be plunged into the horrors of homosexual passions' (pp.215-216). Spencer goes on to make the point that this scene dispels any remaining doubts the reader may have might be about the novel's equation of violence and sex, for 'Dracula's own language conflates erotic desire and feeding; the mouth both kisses and consumes, the same organ gratifying two distinct hungers' (p.216).

### 5.4.2 The Issue of Masculinity

The female vampires pose a threat to Harker's human identity. They threaten to dehumanise him, not only by sucking his blood but by somehow contaminating it in the process, with the result that he will die and become a vampire himself, as will be the case with Lucy. According to William Hughes, 'The vampire process is not merely one of

drainage, but of osmosis also. As sustenance is taken out, degeneration is injected in, and the widening circle of vampires represent the gradual decline of the host race'.[44] Yet Harker's subsequent horror of the vampire women clearly stems less from their capacity to dehumanise him than to emasculate him; it is the thought of female predation rather than its consequences that horrifies. In his article, '"He is English and Therefore Adventurous": Politics, Decadence, and *Dracula*', Troy Boone usefully summarises a point made by Christopher Craft, that 'Harker's desire [for the vampire women] also disgusts him because his powerlessness challenges his self-definition as masculine: the attack on him by the three vampire women makes him feminine, passive, penetrated rather than masculine, active penetrating'.[45] 'I am alone in the castle with those awful women', notes Harker at the end of his journal: 'Faugh! Mina is a woman, and there is naught in common. They are the devils of the pit!' (p.53). Significantly, Harker refers to 'awful women' rather than to 'awful vampires'; it is their gender that seems to make them demonic in his eyes. He would rather climb down the precipice than further endanger his masculine self: 'At least God's mercy is better than that of these monsters, and the precipice is steep and high. At its foot a man may sleep – as a man' (p.53). He may literally sleep at the foot of the precipice 'as a man' should he scale the wall successfully because he will be beyond the reach of the women, who invade his sleep and effectively deprive him of his masculinity; the implication is that he is not 'a man' at the castle. This is also because he is a prisoner, of course. Not unlike Prendick at various intervals in *Moreau*, his position is one of '*feminised*

[44] William Hughes, 'Vampire', in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature* (see Martin, above), pp. 240-45 (p. 244).
[45] Troy Boone, '"He is English and Therefore Adventurous": Politics, Decadence, and *Dracula*', *Studies in the Novel*, 25, 1993, pp. 76-91 (p. 80).

helplessness'.[46] 'Sleep' is more obviously a metaphor for death here; death that is preferable to violation and which will at least ensure Harker's purity, or what is left of it, remains intact. In her essay '"Stalwart Manhood": Failed Masculinity in *Dracula*', Katie Harse rightly observes of *Dracula* that it is 'a text obsessed, as are its characters, with the definition of masculinity', before she goes on to consider its precarious nature in the novel (p.229). This obsession is reflected in the fact that it even extends to the minor characters; hence, Harker's sentiment is echoed by the captain of the *Demeter* with reference to his suicidal crewman, who throws himself over board rather than fall victim to the vampire: 'It was better to die like a man; to die like a sailor in blue water no man can object' (p.85). It is ironic perhaps that the sensation of being drained of blood by the vampire is akin to drowning; at least, that is how Lucy describes it to Mina: 'I seemed sinking into deep green water, and there was a singing in my ears, as I have heard there is to drowning men' (p.98). As for the captain himself, he demonstrates his masculine virtues by carrying out his duty and remaining at the wheel, for which he is accorded hero status by the inhabitants of Whitby and given a public funeral.

The decision of Harker to scale the precipice can be read in contradictory ways. On the one hand, it is symptomatic of his masculine weakness. Unable to stand up to the female vampires in literal and metaphorical terms, he effectively runs away as is the case with Frankenstein and Prendick. On the other hand, Harker also displays manly pluck in what this involves; in other words, he may also sleep at the foot of the precipice 'as a man', having reinvigorated his masculinity in the performance of a courageous act. In fact, the

[46] Katie Harse, '"Stalwart Manhood": Failed Masculinity in *Dracula*', in *Dracula: The Shade and the Shadow*, ed. by Elizabeth Miller (Westcliff-on-Sea: Desert Island Books, 1998), p. 230. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

captain and Harker provide examples of the kind of masculine fortitude that will be required by the men to defeat Dracula and save Mina, 'a cause that requires the letting of blood' (Botting, p.152). Van Helsing articulates the values of heroic male sacrifice when Morris volunteers to provide Lucy's fourth blood transfusion: 'A brave man's blood is the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble' (p.149). Blood letting takes a passive form at this stage. Ignorant of the existence of Dracula, the men address the symptoms of Lucy's illness but not the cause. Only after the vampire has been made visible can they become proactive. According to Smith, 'the Count provokes the vampire hunters into becoming men of action. The Count provides a model of masculinity which the flaccid middle-class professional world would do well to copy' (Smith, 2004, p.144). In other words, they have to imitate Dracula in order to defeat him. As Botting explains:

> As the males of the novel consolidate themselves against Dracula they begin to duplicate as well as reverse his effects. The mirror that Dracula composes for them becomes a mirror of male desire, of what men, in the 1890s, have to become in order to survive. The hunter becomes the hunted, and vice versa, as Dracula is driven out of western Europe. (p.151)

Morris will die in the skirmish that concludes the chase at the end novel, but not before he has seen the sign of Mina's vampiric pollution disappear from her forehead – the red scar vanishes as his blood drains away. Yet this mirroring is perhaps not quite so straightforward. After all, Dracula is more law-abiding than the men in some respects.[47] Also, the vampire hunters revive a warrior tradition that Dracula himself has long since abandoned, albeit with regret, and this is reflected in the tactics for his invasion of Britain: infiltration and assimilation as opposed to confrontation. The men refashion themselves

[47] See Carol A. Senf, '*Dracula*: The Unseen Face in the Mirror', in *The Vampire and the Critics* (see Seed, above), pp. 93-104 (p. 99).

more in the image of the Count, who, in his own words, 'fought for them, hundreds of years before they were born' (p.288).

In the event, Harker completes the climb successfully and manages to make it back to Budapest but is reduced to 'a wreck of himself' by his experiences in Transylvania according to Mina, who visits him in hospital (p.103). Like Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, he returns home in a debilitated condition, as if the carrier of a virus or infection. As Hughes notes in his discussion of male hysteria in *Dracula*, 'the Count's male victims, though unbitten, are paradoxically infected, debilitated, and subjected to progressive degeneration through contact with the vampire'.[48] Nonetheless, when Mina asks Van Helsing for a medical opinion on her husband, he gives a reassuring diagnosis based upon Harker's remarkable escape:

> 'let me tell you from experience of men, that one who would do as he did in going down that wall [...] is not to be injured in permanence by a shock. His brain and his heart are all right, this I swear, before I have even seen him.' (pp.186-87)

Such are his curative powers that Van Helsing even 'seems to have made a new man' of Harker before he has seen him, through the written confirmation of the reality of his experiences at the castle in a letter to Mina: 'it was the doubt as to the reality of the whole thing that knocked me over', writes Harker in his journal, the resumption of which indicates his revitalised subjectivity (p.187). The word 'seems', however, sounds a cautionary note and hints at limitations to his recovery. Indeed, the subsequent inability to defend Mina from Dracula in the asylum suggests that this 'new man' is made from the old supine mould. When the men burst into the bedroom, he is to be found lying on the bed in an

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[48] William Hughes, '"Terrors that I dare not think of": Masculinity, Hysteria and Empiricism in Stoker's *Dracula*', in *Dracula: The Shade and the Shadow* (see Harse, above), pp. 93-103 (pp. 94-5).

apparent hypnotic 'stupor' (p.281). Snapped out of it by Van Helsing, he belatedly springs into action, 'all the man in him awake at the need for instant exertion' (p.283). One is reminded of Atherton's description of Lessingham in *The Beetle*: 'his is one of those individualities which, confronted by certain eventualities, collapse, – to rise, the moment of trial having passed' (p.108).

While Dracula has drained Mina's blood on three consecutive nights, the disclosure of the vampire's predation seems to suck the life out of Harker, whose physical transformation over night is almost as remarkable at that of Lanyon, or Dorian having stabbed the portrait. According to Seward, 'Last night he was a frank, happy-looking man, with a strong youthful face, full of energy, and with dark brown hair. To-day he is a drawn, haggard old man, whose white hair matches well with his hollow burning eyes' (p.301). 'Haggard' suggests exhaustion but Seward states that his vigour remains intact and likens him to 'a living flame', an image associated with Dracula; specifically, the 'burning eyes' that the distinctly vampiric Harker also has here (p.301).

Harker's eyes not only burn with anguish the day after the vampire is discovered in the bedroom. Seward describes how 'his eyes blazed' with anger while listening to the account of how Mina is forced to drink the blood of Dracula, whose own 'eyes flamed red' upon being interrupted by the men (p.284, p.282). There are additional similarities between the two. For example, the violated Mina seeks solace by placing her head upon his breast. As Leonard Wolf comments, 'This position, with her husband, mirrors the earlier embrace between herself and Dracula'.[49] Mina stains his night-shirt in the process to her horror – horror at the sign of her pollution and her consequent capacity to pollute: 'I must touch him

[49] Leonard Wolf, *The Essential Dracula* (London: Plume, 1993), p. 339. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

or kiss him no more' (p.284). But it is also as if she has just been feeding at Harker's breast. The point is that the doubling undermines the ostensible binary oppositions on the level of subtext. This repetition of detail is a favoured device of Stoker in *Dracula*. For example, having forced the door to the forbidden chamber and encountered the female vampires, Harker describes how it feels as though his mind has become 'unhinged' (p.36). Seward has an idea 'buzzing' round his head when he notes Renfield's habit of eating flies: and Van Hesling refers to Dracula's 'child-brain' and then immediately addresses Harker as 'my child' (p.302). The doubling between Dracula and Harker begins at the castle, both in symbolic terms and at the level of plot. This will be considered further in the discussion of Harker's role of observer with which the chapter concludes. First, the hypnotic power of Dracula with reference to Lucy and Mina is to be considered.

### 5.5. The Hypnotist Dracula

#### 5.5.1. Lucy

Both Lucy and Mina are in Whitby when the *Demeter* arrives but it is Lucy who becomes the first victim of the vampire, having walked in her sleep to the suicide's seat in the churchyard. Her nature makes her more susceptible to the vampire's influence. According to Mina: 'Lucy is so sweet and sensitive that she feels influences more acutely than other people do', before she adds prophetically, 'I greatly fear that she is of too supersensitive a nature to go through the world without trouble' (p.87). This comment is prompted by her agitated and anxious behaviour at the funeral of the captain of the *Demeter*. She also reacts in a strange way to an incident involving a dog, which barks through the service until its owner throws it against the tombstone of the suicide's seat and

it falls into a silent 'tremble' (p.87). Mina recalls how 'Lucy [...] looked at it in an agonized sort of way' (p.87). It is almost as if Lucy has a premonition of her own fate, for this is the spot where her gently trembling unconscious self will be found that night and she will subsequently recall the indeterminate sight 'of something long and dark with red eyes' and 'a sort of agonising feeling' (p.98). The dog barks at and is cowed by the vampire, at rest in the grave, whose presence also accounts for Lucy's agitation and uneasiness. Like Renfield, she is a human barometer as to the Count's proximity. It is the animal, the insane male and the hysterical female that are most susceptible to his influence.

In fact, such is her 'supersensitive' nature that Dracula influences Lucy before he lands in Whitby, with her becoming increasingly excitable as the *Demeter* approaches. Dracula's distant influence manifests itself in terms of changes in Lucy's behaviour. For example, the sailing vampire rekindles her childhood habit of walking in her sleep, which he will exploit upon arrival. Dracula is already taking control over her, or the unconscious self that is receptive to his signals. Mina explains Lucy's resumption of her sleepwalking with reference to the impending arrival of her fiancé, Holmwood: 'She wants to take him to the seat on the churchyard cliff and show him the beauty of Whitby. I daresay it is the waiting which disturbs her; she will be all right when he arrives' (p.72). The text does not say where, if anywhere, Lucy goes when she first walks in her sleep but Mina implies that she would go to the suicide's seat. It is as if she cannot wait for Arthur, in the sense that she is impatient for his arrival – and their impending marriage perhaps, in which her sexual desire will be satisfied. Indeed, it is her 'supersensitive' nature that leads Lucy into transgressive realms of thought. Thus, the pain of rejecting worthy suitors prompts this eligible young lady to ask in her second letter to Mina: 'Why can't they let a girl marry

three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it' (p.59). Lucy's solution to the problem of male competition, or disappointment, hints at her own capacious desires, the ability to satisfy more than one husband. The theme of female appetite surfaces in the women's writing: 'I believe we should have shocked the 'New Woman' with our appetites', writes Mina following a particularly decadent tea (p.88). The remark is innocent enough but the sexual subtext of the novel gives it piquancy; indeed, the issue of Lucy's physical desirability reappears only a few lines later in relation to the beauty of her sleeping self: 'She has more colour in her cheeks than usual, and looks, oh, so sweet', writes Mina (p.88). 'If Mr Holmwood fell in love with her seeing her only in the drawing-room, I wonder what he would say if he saw her now' (p.89). Thus far, Mina's observations have tended to focus upon the mental and physical wellbeing of her friend, which anticipates the subsequent medical scrutiny she will receive. She sees Lucy through Holmwood's eyes, which not only vaguely eroticises their relationship but also masculinises her, something which recurs throughout the novel. Mina is masculinised, while Harker is feminised. The point here, however, is that Stoker emphasises Lucy's sexual attractiveness just hours before her encounter with Dracula. The next time Mina looks, she will be gone. Of course, she proves literally unable to wait for Arthur because of her attraction to the vampire. In one way, Mina provides the correct explanation but for the wrong man. Lucy is waiting for Dracula and 'she will be all right when he arrives' to the extent that his initial feed in the churchyard has a favourable effect upon her. According to Mina, 'The adventure of the night does not seem to have harmed her; on the contrary, it has benefited her, for she looks better this morning than she has done for weeks' (p.92).

Just as Lucy's initial loss of control at night indicates Dracula's influence, so it is possible to infer that he commands the unconscious Lucy to come to the churchyard: 'when I told her to come at once [...] she rose without a word, with the obedience of a child' (p.91). The words belong to Mina and refer to her rescue of the vamped Lucy but they could be spoken by Dracula, who turns the sleeping female into his marionette. When the action switches to London, Lucy is able to remember very little about the renewed attacks but one thing she does recall are 'the distant voices which seemed so close to me, the harsh sounds that came from I know not where and commanded me to do I know not what' (p.135). Lucy gets dressed twice in her sleep on the night of the arrival of the *Demeter*. Perhaps he also commands her to wear only her nightdress the next night, the sign of her utter defencelessness – or her abandonment should we read the spectacle in terms of her desire for the vampire. Mina's description of her desire to be bitten springs to mind here: 'I did not want to hinder him' (p.287).

On the one hand, Lucy's sleepwalking is symptomatic of her susceptibility to Dracula: on the other hand, it also means that she is not complicit in the encounter because she is unconscious and powerless.[50] Stoker makes this last point clear through Van Helsing when he conducts his examination of the vampire Lucy. Spencer paraphrases the professor thus: 'Her saving grace [...] is that she yielded to Dracula only during a trance – that is, when her conscious personality was not in command – so her unconscious personality alone has become vampiric' (p.211). It is the entranced Lucy who is bitten and subsequently becomes the vampire Lucy, who is herself entranced. The point is that Lucy retains an essential purity in spite of everything: she is, to borrow Hardy's description of

[50] Moss makes a similar point (p. 130).

Tess, 'a pure woman'. Or, to adapt Jekyll's misapprehension of his own innocence: it is Dracula, after all, and Dracula alone, that is guilty. Belford highlights the relative invisibility of the Count from the novel, noting that 'Dracula is present [in one of his various forms] on only sixty-two pages out of a total of 390 in the first edition' (p.270). Griffin makes two points with reference to this invisibility. The first is that 'it is crucial to Stoker's purposes that Dracula be a pervasive presence, a force, rather than a "character". He is more dangerous when incorporeal than when visible', which is most certainly the case. The vampire has to be made visible in metaphorical and literal terms before he can be defeated. This is accomplished through the discourse of vampirism brought by Van Helsing, the assembly of the narrative by Mina and the actions of the men as they flush him out of London. The second is 'that active vampirism, with its dimension of sexuality, is dissociated from Dracula and associated instead with the four female vampires seeking male victims' (pp.137-38). Vampiric predation is clearly associated with the women vampires but the idea that it is dissociated from Dracula because he is invisible is surely incorrect. In fact, the opposite is true. The point is that the gap in the narrative created by Dracula's absence allows one to read his active vampirism in. Harker's journal means that the reader intuits his presence from the marks that he leaves on the body of his female victim, even if the characters themselves are in the dark. The fact that the act of predation with its sexual dimension is hidden does not so much disassociate active predation from Dracula but point to its illicit nature. Lucy's passivity means that she is beyond reproach; indeed, when Dracula renews his attacks upon her in London, there is an even stronger displacement of agency, with the ill woman confined to her bed. However, on another level it is also as if she is conducting a secret romantic liaison, something that is also suggested

by the spectre of scandal that haunts *Dracula*, as with all the main novels under discussion. Mina, for example, is only too aware of the potentially scandalous nature of the sleepwalking episode: 'I was filled with anxiety about Lucy, not only for her health, lest she should suffer from the exposure, but for her reputation in case the story should get wind' (p.92). Lucy herself begs Mina to remain silent and she consents on account 'of how such a story might become distorted – nay, infallibly would – in case it should leak out' (p.92). One final point about the power of the hypnotic gaze with reference to Lucy but which is more generally applicable relates to its paradoxical nature: useful to justify attraction to the taboo figure of the vampire (because attraction is hypnotic and therefore impossible to resist), it simultaneously points to where attraction is strongest, otherwise justification would not be necessary. The thematic use of hypnotic power inevitably highlights the attraction it is supposed to justify.

### 5.5.2. The Blood Transfusions

Lucy's desire to be free to marry as many men as she wants, as critics have noted, is satisfied by the four blood transfusions she receives from her original three suitors in addition to Van Helsing. It is the unfortunate Holmwood who articulates the matrimonial symbolism of this medical procedure, when he reveals how following the transfusion, it felt as though 'they two had been really married, and that she was his wife in the sight of God' (p.174). Van Helsing's consequent 'fit of hysterics' is such when alone with Seward, that the doctor prudently pulls down the carriage blinds in order to prevent them from being overlooked (p.174). Van Helsing explains his outburst having recovered his composure, thus: 'Then this sweet maid is a polyandrist and me [...] am bigamist' (p.176). Stoker's

depiction of the transfusions is further evidence of the way in which the conservative and the transgressive are intertwined in the novel (vampirism epitomises this interwoven-ness in terms of the heterosexual limits that are placed on predation). On the one hand, Stoker carefully arranges the male donors in symbolic order of merit. As Lucy's fiancé, Holmwood is first, even though this requires that he appear somewhat out of the blue. Van Helsing's anger at the interruption turns to delight at the sight of his masculine virility. This is certainly how Seward interprets Van Helsing's lit expression: 'as he took in his stalwart proportions and recognized the strong young manhood which seemed to emanate from him, his eyes gleamed' (p.121). Perhaps it is an awareness of the homoerotic undertones of Van Helsing's admiration that prompts Stoker to put their relationship upon a paternal footing fifty pages later, when the professor reveals that his affection for Arthur is based on his similarity in age and appearance to his own dead son, another uncanny act of recognition in the novel.

Van Helsing's 'gleaming' eyes clearly recall Dracula, one of a number of details in the novel that suggests doubling between the two adversaries. Lucy's aforementioned excitability as Dracula approaches on the *Demeter* is echoed later by Mina as she waits to meet Van Helsing for the first time. Their mutual foreignness and use of ports are more obvious examples: and the fact that they are both endowed with hypnotic power, of course. In the pursuit at the end of the novel, Van Helsing hypnotises Mina before sunrise and sunset on the train. According to Harker: 'He seems to have power at these particular moments to simply will, and her thoughts obey him' (p.333). In the transfusion scene the gaze of Van Helsing is vampiric in the sense that he desires Holmwood's blood for the operation, based on the recognition that this evident young man of action will be a potent

source: 'you are more good than us, old or young, who toil much in the world of thought. Our nerves are not so calm and our blood not so bright than yours!' (p.121). It is not simply a question of Holmwood's potency but his purity also: 'He is so young and strong and of blood so pure that we need not defibrinate it' (p.122). In addition to his eyes, Van Helsing's words also bring the vampire back into mind, for they clearly recall those of the female vampire at the castle ('He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all'). Holmwood also has fiery eyes in this scene. They not only signal his determined resolution to help Lucy but also hint at the erotic dimension that informs the transfusion; indeed, the romantic status that determines his primacy, also entitles him to give blood for longer, in addition to kissing the sleeping woman at the start of the operation, as the two doctors discretely avert their gaze. It follows that the threat of the vampire increases in proportion to the emphasis upon the quality of Holmwood's blood, the high esteem in which it is held. Dracula will drain his blood and that of the other donors. 'You think to baffle me – with your pale faces all in a row, like sheep in a butcher's,' Dracula taunts the men in Piccadilly (p.306). Their faces are 'pale' because they are scared but also because he has recently drained their blood through Lucy.

Seward donates blood after Holmwood, in preference to Van Helsing. He is younger but also English; the order seems partly determined by nationality. The Dutch Van Helsing is next. The American Morris provides the fourth transfusion, after what turns out to be Dracula's final attack on Lucy. His unannounced arrival is also fortuitous, albeit ultimately futile, because the two doctors have no more blood to donate and Van Helsing has discounted the possibility of a transfusion from one of the maids. This is a textual necessity because an outsider would disrupt the symbolism of the operation. In addition, their gender

and class makes them unsuitable in this more than medical procedure. If Stoker carefully arranges the donors in symbolic order on the one hand, this apparent decorum contrasts with the transgressive implications that arise from the repeat nature of the transfusions with different donors on the other. Nor is it simply a question of the apparent polygamy of Lucy because marriage is also a sexual euphemism. While Holmwood articulates the symbolic nature of the transfusion for him in marital but ceremonial terms, Lucy expresses her subsequent feelings in a quasi-erotic way that is more suggestive of the physical consummation of marriage: 'Somehow Arthur feels very, very close to me. I seem to feel his presence warm about me' (p.126). Seward also describes his feelings in fervent terms: 'No man knows till he experiences it, what it is to feel his own life-blood drawn away into the veins of the woman he loves' (p.128). Seward is aggrieved when the Professor halts the operation, prematurely from his point of view. The doctor's rapture is not so far removed from Lucy's almost transcendental feelings when first bitten by the vampire. The veil of secrecy Van Helsing suggests they draw over his transfusion lest it 'enjealous' Holmwood and the silence with which the men greet his matrimonial revelation after the burial of Lucy, points to the adulterous undertones of what is on the surface an essential operation (p.128).

As for the patient herself, Lucy passes from one artificially induced passive condition to another. The female is drained of blood by the vampire when hypnotised and pumped with blood by the males in a state of narcotic sleep. For example, Van Helsing gives her an injection of morphine before the first transfusion, a kind of secular, or scientific, equivalent of the hypnotic power of the vampire. The theme of narcotics runs through the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. Dorian tells Lord Henry, 'I must sow poppies in my garden' following Sibyl's

suicide (p.101). This refers to his general need to cultivate forgetfulness but it also anticipates his subsequent descent into opium addiction. The memory of his murder of Basil 'was a thing to be driven out of the mind, to be drugged with poppies' (p.163). Montgomery pours Prendick 'a dark liquid' after his pursuit by the Leopard Man in order to calm his shattered nerves and make him sleep (p.47). In *Dracula*, Seward drugs Renfield so that he can read his patient's note book without him knowing it, an example of his outrageously unethical behaviour. The doctor sinks into depression after he has been rejected by Lucy and battles with the temptation of narcotic oblivion. Other references to drugs in the novel include the way Dracula laces the sherry with Mrs Westenra's laudanum in order to incapacitate the servants, which facilitates his final attack upon the abandoned Lucy, while Mina inadvertently assists the vampire two nights after the initial attack by taking an opiate. Pick notes that the debate on hypnotism and sexual crime was paralleled by 'discussions about how drugs might be used to dominate a sexual prey' (Pick, 2000, p.97). Indeed, Belford relates that Sir William Wilde was accused by one of his patients of raping her after he has administered laudanum (p.65). The spectre of drugged rape hovers over the blood transfusions, the by-product of the desire of Stoker to eroticise them and keep Lucy pure at the same time. The four operations may be the fulfilment of her spoken wish to 'marry' more than one man but her unconscious passivity also means that she remains unblemished, albeit at the expense of the men, who 'marry' her in her sleep. Lucy is as much their puppet as Dracula's, rationalised by the medical status of the procedure. As with the hypnotic power of the vampire, the drug references show Stoker thinking about the sexual subtext of the novel, the need to delimit the suggestion of female desire. Again, the paradox is that they flag up the very thing they are intended to conceal.

The slippage between the medical and the erotic in the novel is epitomised by the gaze of Seward. Lucy writes in her first letter:

> He seems absolutely imperturbable. I can fancy what a wonderful power he must have over his patients. He has a curious habit of looking one straight in the face, as if trying to read one's thoughts. He tries this on very much with me, but I flatter myself he has got a tough nut to crack. [...] He says that I afford him a curious psychological study. (p.55)

Ironically, thought-reading is one of Van Helsing's intellectual possibilities that Seward rejects but the point is that the power of his gaze vaguely mirrors Dracula: as Moss notes, 'his own display of scientific scrutiny is similar to the vampire's hypnotic intrusion' (p.136). In *The Beetle*, Dora's infatuation with the scientist Atherton, Seward's counterpart, is put down to his 'most extraordinary eyes' by Marjorie Lindon (p.194). His powerful gaze literally mirrors the Beetle:

> I fancy that those eyes of his have as much to with Dora's state as anything. I heard it said that he possesses the hypnotic power to an unusual degree, and that, if he chose to exercise it, he might become a danger to society. I believe he has hypnotised Dora. (p.194)

Seward's interest in Lucy is obviously less 'psychological' than romantic. The implication is that he tries to wield the same power over Lucy he has over his patients. Unlike Dora, she is not susceptible. The irony of the fact that his interest is not 'psychological' is that she becomes one of his patients, his previously ineffectual gaze now constrained by their previous intimacy: 'you must bear in mind that I did not have full opportunity of examination such as I should wish', Seward informs Holmwood, 'our very friendship makes a little difficulty which not even medical science or custom can bridge over' (p.110). Lucy's notion that she is 'a tough nut to crack' is borne out by her medical condition that defies Seward's 'scientific scrutiny'. Lucy's vampirism provides ample opportunity for further examination. Her passage into the undead state of the vampire is signalled by the

paradoxical restoration of her beauty noticed by the two doctors. The woman who prepares Lucy's corpse also remarks upon it. Even the ministers who will conduct the burial service are unable to take their eyes off Lucy at rest in her coffin. In the discussion of Du Maurier, we saw how the dead body of Trilby becomes the sexual object of the gaze in the morgue scenario and something similar happens here, albeit in a more covert manner as far as the men are concerned. Lucy's shrouded corpse is partially unveiled twice before burial under the auspices of secret duty and mourning, as with the elaborate scruples that attend the unwrapping of Queen Tera's mummy in *The Jewel of Seven Stars*.[51] On the first occasion, Van Helsing turns back the shroud so that he can look with Seward, who can hardly believe that Lucy is dead. The following day Seward removes the linen from her face for Arthur and suggests that the restoration of her beauty is natural in order to assuage the doubts of the betrothed over her death. Again, these unveilings are rationalised by the medical status of the two doctors.

### 5.5.3. Mina

Dracula attacks Mina at the asylum while the men are searching Carfax. They have taken the calamitous decision to exclude her altogether from the operation against Dracula. On this occasion she has not only been left on her own but the bedroom has not been secured against the vampire either. The intention is to shield her but they inadvertently expose her instead. As Mina reflects with reference to her own role in Whitby, having initiated the women's visits to the churchyard: 'Everything that one does seems, no matter

[51] See David Seed, 'Eruptions of the Primitive into the Present: *The Jewel of Seven Stars* and *The Lair of the White Worm*' in *History, Psychoanalysis and the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes and Andrew Smith (London: Palgrave, 1998), pp. 188-204 (p. 193).

how right it may be, to bring on the very thing which is most to be deplored' (p.257). These words are written the day after she has been attacked. The irony is that she does not appreciate their relevance to her own predicament because she regards the attack as a dream like Jonathan and Lucy before her: 'I must have fallen asleep, for, except dreams, I do not remember anything' (p.258). Stoker is careful to emphasise her comprehension of the attack in terms of dream. In other words, he engineers a description of the attack, or events leading up to it, through Mina, and simultaneously negates her agency through the misapprehension. The fact that she does not know her dream was real indicates her passivity. Furthermore, she is innocent of concealment from her husband, for there is nothing to hide from her point of view. To put it another way, the misapprehension justifies her concealment; indeed, notice how carefully her concealment is justified, not only in terms of her comprehension of the experience in terms of dream, but one she would not want to worry the men with: 'Such a dream at the present time would become woven into their fears for me' (p.259). The misapprehension also leads her to compound her own vulnerability when she subsequently takes the drug to help her sleep, thus reconfirming her point about how well-intentioned acts have disastrous consequences.

Mina's passivity is also depicted in terms of the emphasis upon her physical powerlessness in this scene. In fact, she seems to succumb to the hypnotic power of the vampire prior to his entrance. The sight of the mist outside makes her feel fatigued as she returns to bed. She remembers in the apparent dream that follows how: 'I was powerless to act; my feet, and my hands, and my brain were weighted' (p.258). The mist invades the room, not unlike the fog in Jekyll's cabinet, but Mina is unable to check that the window is shut. It not simply a question of physical but mental disempowerment: 'some leaden

lethargy seemed to chain my limbs and even my will. I lay still and endured; that was all. I closed my eyes, but could still see through my eyelids' (p.258). In his commentary on the novel, Wolf points to the similarities between this scene and that of Harker's encounter with the three female vampires, with respect to Mina's inertia and her peeping gaze. According to Wolf, 'The erotic content of the scene is unavoidable' (p.311). The way in which she repeats her husband's words 'I must have fallen asleep' also brings that episode back into mind, while there is even a reference to 'those awful women' (p.259). Stoker draws a veil over the physical attack itself through Mina's lapse into unconsciousness and it is left to the reader to fill in the gap, prompted by the references to earlier incidents (one from Whitby is also mentioned). This difference between the two scenes can partly be attributed to Stoker's wish to spread the depiction of the attack over different nights: but it is also indicative of Stoker's much more guarded handling of female desire. Mina may peep out from under her eye-lashes but certainly not 'in an agony of delightful anticipation' (p.38). The reader is reminded of Harker but the way in which the depiction is de-eroticised is equally striking. Mina speaks of 'endurance' rather than 'anticipation'. The suggestion is of rape rather than seduction. Another difference between the two scenes is that there is a far greater emphasis upon the powerlessness of Mina, who seems to be overwhelmed by an external rather than internal force. On the one hand, this powerlessness can be taken at face value: on the other hand, it can be read in terms of the coding of female desire, the vigilant justification of her 'fascination' (p.259).

Mina wakes up instead of fainting next time Dracula materialises from the mist in the bedroom. She does not scream out because she is 'paralysed', though she appears to be frozen with fear rather than hypnotised, which would explain both why she is conscious

and Dracula's threat to kill her husband should she sound the alarm, although there may be a suggestion to the contrary as we shall see (p.287). Dracula also implies that it is in her own interest to remain silent, given his previous two appearances; indeed, Mina seems to confirm his suggestion of complicity: 'I was bewildered, and strangely enough, I did not want to hinder him' (p.287). Mina's self-analysis following her prank on Van Helsing, when she hands him her shorthand diary to read rather than the translated version, comes back into mind: 'I could not resist the temptation', she comments, 'I suppose it is the some of the taste of the original apple that remains still in our mouths' (p.183). Commentators like Leatherdale are correct to point out the similarity in response between this daughter of Eve to Dracula and Harker to the vampire women (p.396). The circumlocution with which Mina expresses her attraction is noteworthy nonetheless, as well as the way she immediately rationalises that attraction: 'I suppose it is part of the horrible curse that this happens when his touch is on his victim. And oh, my God, my God, pity me! He placed his reeking lips upon my throat!' (p.287). The word 'touch' can be taken as an euphemism for physical violation, though it could also refer to the hypnotic hold the vampire has over his victim. The gaze of the Caswall family in *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) is described in the same powerful terms as the vampire's 'touch' by one Sir Nathaniel de Salis, while its hybrid nature also recalls Van Helsing:

> 'the most remarkable characteristic is the eyes. Black, piercing, almost unendurable, they seem to contain in themselves a remarkable will power [...]: a power impregnated with some mysterious quality, partly hypnotic, partly mesmeric, which seems to take away from eyes that meet them all power of resistance – nay, all power of wishing to resist.'[52]

[52] Bram Stoker, 'The Lair of the White Worm' (1911), in *Bram Stoker's Dracula Omnibus* (London: Orion, 1992), p. 318.

Mina's point is that Dracula has drained her wish to oppose him and that he has made her not want to stop him. Her desire is really his and she is properly repulsed in hindsight; hence, the reference to his fetid kiss, which provides an additional justification of her attraction. In his discussion of 'The Parasite', Luckhurst notes how 'parasitic rapport provides a displacement which allows Gilroy both to experience and deny sexuality, rendering it simultaneously self and other', and something similar can also be suggested in relation to Mina (p.158). For a short period the release of Hyde permits Jekyll do the same, in his ill-fated pursuit of a pure sexual subjectivity without forfeiting the pleasure.

The way in which the unconscious Lucy becomes Dracula's puppet in Whitby is illustrative of the difference between the two young women. Lucy becomes his puppet before she is even bitten. Mina also succumbs to the hypnotic power of the vampire, but he only has the capacity to invade her mind and control her from afar, after he has forced her to drink his blood, punishment for her assistance to the men in their fight against him: 'You have aided in thwarting me; now you shall come to my call. When my brain says "Come!" to you, you shall cross land or sea to do my bidding' (p.288). The infected Mina subsequently puts this forward as one of two reasons why Jonathan and herself must accompany the men in the pursuit of Dracula rather than remain at home. It will be less easy for her to escape when the call comes: 'I know that if he tells me to come in secret, I must come by wile; by any device to hoodwink – even Jonathan' (p.327). She will be safer under the watchful gaze of the group. The second reason is they can use her to spy on the movements of the Count by exploiting the psychic connection between them under hypnosis. Van Helsing has already hypnotised Mina at her instigation. He puts into a trance in the bedroom before dawn and ushers in the remaining men so that they can listen to the

answers she gives to his questions. The entranced female enters the vampire's mind and deciphers his senses. Harker notes in his journal how, 'it was as though she were interpreting something. I have heard her use the same tone when reading her notes' (p.312). The crucial fact of Dracula's flight from Britain is established on this occasion, with Mina's relay of the sound of a ship weighing anchor. Mina makes the vampire visible through her assembly of the narrative: as Harker notes, 'the whole story is put together in such a way that every point tells' (p.248). Now her visionary powers reinvigorate the hunt. In this way, Mina is a part of 'Trilby's web' identified by Connor. Judith Weissman highlights Mina's passivity after she is bitten – 'she learns to resign the active role she had taken in pursing Dracula and becomes passive, helping only by being hypnotized and giving messages while in a trance'[53]. Yet Luckhurst rightly points to Mina's productivity whilst emphasising the importance of the fact that entrancement is not only coded in terms of horror in *Dracula*: 'her trance-states and telepathy work *for* the powers of modernity and progress, doubling the effectiveness of the information systems that trap the Count' (p.165).

### 5.5. Reading the 'Beast Man': The Narrator as Observer

My discussion of *Moreau* began with the perceptual drama that characterises looking in the novel and I want to conclude the discussion of *Dracula* on a similar note, revisiting some key issues in the process. Like *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Moreau*, Harker's journal is also characterised by telling moments of perceptual drama. For example, on the way to the

[53] Judith Weissman, 'Women and Vampires: *Dracula* as Victorian Novel', in *The Vampire and the Critics* (see Seed, above), p. 73.

castle, Harker sees blue flames in the forest which the coach driver (Dracula) stops to examine. 'Once there appeared a strange optical effect,' notes Harker:

> when he stood between me and the flame he did not obstruct it, for I could see its ghostly flicker all the same. This startled me, but as the effect was momentary, I took it that my eyes deceived me straining through the darkness. (p.13)

The body is rendered transparent and insubstantial, contrary perhaps to the characterisation of the vampire in terms of its bodily needs, the emphasis on materiality. Harker explains it away prematurely as is his wont, but the 'strange optical effect' – one wonders whether the cinematic imagination identified by Prawer is also at work here, as Harker gazes intently at the flickering light through the dark – provides the reader with an early indication of the supernatural status of the Count, his transgression of the boundary between life and death. In the mirror scene at the castle, Harker searches in vain for Dracula's reflected image:

> This time there could be no error, for the man was close to me, and I could see him over my shoulder. But there no reflection of him in the mirror! The whole room behind me was displayed; but there no sign of a man in it, except myself. (p.25)

The absent reflection indicates Dracula's difference; there is 'no sign' of the Count because he is not 'a man' and therefore confounds certain systems of representation. As with the indescribable Hyde, we can consider the 'invisible' vampire in the context of the drive towards specularity discussed by Flint. In a culture in which specularity is becoming dominant, anxieties coalesce around the unseen, or unseeable, and therefore the uncontrolled. The Gothic makes manifest these anxieties; hence, Dracula's resistance to the gaze, as far as his absent reflection is concerned. At the same time, the illusory quality that signifies difference, also opens up a space for the suggestion of sameness on the level of subtext; that the hidden face in the mirror is Harker's own.

The inability of Harker to see Dracula is also apt, given all the visual clues he misses from the Golden Krone Hotel onwards with respect to the demonic and atavistic nature of his host. Discrepancies in the observer's scan of reality also tend to be prematurely explained away; hence, Harker's assumption that he is dreaming when he sees the shadowless female vampires. Harker is unable to resist the evidence of his own eyes in the case of the upside down Count descending the castle wall: 'At first I could not believe my eyes. I thought it was some trick of the moonlight, some weird effect of shadow; but I kept looking, and it could be no delusion' (p.34). The bat or 'lizard'-like Count is clearly visible but he defies categorisation like Hyde. Harker voices the question that is at the heart of *fin-de-siècle* Gothic: 'What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man?' (p.34). According to Clive Bloom, 'What is witnessed here is pure evil: something *without* human values – a movement into the 'abyss'.[54] Yet this is to ignore the fact that Harker asks a question here. It is the indeterminacy that horrifies the spectator. The point is not so much that the Count is 'pure evil' but that he blurs the boundary between the human and nonhuman: less 'a movement into the 'abyss'' that the vertiginous depths of evolutionary history. The shocking nature of this sight is heightened by the fact that he is wearing Harker's own clothes on another occasion. Harker remains unbitten but the vampire appropriates his identity nonetheless. The Count plays the role of the imprisoned Harker outside the castle to suggest that he is at liberty to come and go. Harker also reflects that this deception is calculated to shift the blame onto him for the crimes committed by the Count. Indeed, when the mother spots him at the castle window, she accuses him of having abducted her child. The apparent ease with which Dracula

[54] Clive Bloom, ed., *Gothic Horror: A Reader's Guide From Poe to King and Beyond* (London: MacMillan, 1998), p. 16.

impersonates Harker points to the fragility of his identity, which seems to amount to little more than his clothes. The fact that it is dark may explain the error but the suggestion that his face identifies him as the abductor is even more disturbing, given Dracula's distinctive features, as if the impersonation extends to his body – or that Harker has become more like Dracula physically, the result of 'this strange night-existence' at the castle perhaps (p.25). Of course, it is not long before Harker mimics Dracula by repeatedly climbing down the wall. Furthermore, this is not the only occasion that Harker is mistaken for Dracula. When he wakes Mina the morning after the men have searched Carfax, he describes how: 'for a few seconds she did not recognize me, but looked at me with a sort of blank terror' (p.254). Upon waking she momentarily confuses her husband with the vampire that has preyed upon her in her sleep. Typically, Harker spots that Mina is 'paler than usual' but fails to see the significance of his own observation (p.254).

Harker hears rather than sees, as his name implies: or if he sees, he does not recognise, which makes him like Prendick, whose identification of 'the mark of the beast' on the island is very much delayed. Harker's degeneration-inflected description of the Count is a case in point:

> His face was a strong – a very strong – aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bush hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy moustached, was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (pp.17-18)

By way of contrast to the un-representable Hyde, Dracula is described with ease; it is the metamorphic nature of his body rather than its indescribability that makes the vampire difficult to pin down. As Pick notes,

> *Dracula* is full of aspiring physiognomists, seeking to probe demeanours, features and expressions [...]. Good and evil are sometimes written in the features, sometimes erased by them. Distance and perspective alter the nature of what is seen. [...] Physiognomy is seen to be an enigmatic and potentially counter-productive study, the face is at once a camouflage and a symptom. Dracula after all can change his form at will. (1996, p.158)

While Utterson reads 'Satan's signature' written across the detestable features of Hyde (p.42), and Hallward sees 'the face of a satyr' in Dorian's picture (p.157), the lengthy description of Dracula is left to speak for itself in this instance. Critics like Ernest Fontana have noted Dracula's physical resemblance to Lombroso's 'criminal man'.[55] In the discussion of Wilde, the picture was likened to a mug shot that represents Dorian's ongoing degeneration. Harker provides a kind of verbal mug shot of the criminal and degenerate Dracula here, although this signification is suppressed in the consciousness of the observer. Dracula appears merely strange looking for Harker; alterity resides on the surface or in the sign alone. Thus, his inability to see Dracula's reflection is also symbolic of his own lack of insight. In his obituary, Freud recalls Charcot's self-description as 'a "visuel," a man who sees' (p.12). Freud continues: 'He used to look again and again at the things he did not understand [...] till suddenly an understanding of them dawned on him' (p.12). This brings another *fin-de-siècle* figure to mind, Sherlock Holmes, the point being that Harker is the opposite of the detective in terms of this absence of deduction. 'You see, but you do not observe,' Holmes censures Watson in 'A Scandal in Bohemia', (published in *The*

[55] Ernest Fontana, 'Lombroso's Criminal Man and Stoker's *Dracula*' in *The Vampire and the Critics* (see Seed, above), pp. 159-166.

*Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892)), which is equally applicable to Harker, with respect to Dracula's degenerate nature and his vampirism more generally.[56]

It almost goes without saying that the text requires Harker not to identify Dracula's vampirism straight away, otherwise there would be no suspense. Nonetheless, on a narrative level it is possible to understand Harker's resistance to the evidence of his own eyes, as an attempt to preserve the world view that acknowledgement of the existence of the vampire would destroy. As Seed argues,

> The progression of events is remorselessly toward confronting Dracula's own vampirism, confronting the very thing that Harker's rationalism is unwilling to accept. There is therefore a constant backwards pull in Harker's journal, an attempt to retard or even suspend the flow of events so that he can organize them into some kind of explanation. (1988, p.197)

The disinclination of Harker to read the bodily signs of Dracula's evolutionary history could be taken as part of the rearward drag identified by Seed. However, the text also requires that Harker refuse to identify Dracula's degenerate nature straight away, not to avoid a premature disclosure so much as a premature delimitation of the monstrous. The paradox of the 'mug shot' is this: it is clearly intended to convey Dracula's otherness, which the description works so hard to express, not only through an unacknowledged recapitulation of Lombrosian characteristics but through the insistent emphasis upon what Baker refers to as 'the extreme strangeness of the figure: "peculiarly" is used twice in the passage, "very" twice, and "remarkable," "astonishing," "extremely," and "extraordinary" once each' (p.211). Yet it simultaneously 'contains' Dracula by fitting him into

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[56] Arthur Conan Doyle, 'A Scandal in Bohemia' in 'Part One: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes 1891-92', *The Original Illustrated Sherlock Holmes* (Secaucus, NJ: Castle, [n.d.]), p. 12. For a discussion of the gaze with reference to Holmes, see Ronald R. Thomas, 'Making Darkness Visible: Capturing the Criminal and Observing the Law in Victorian Photography and Detective Fiction', in *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, ed. by Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 134-168.

conventional categories; that is, once the description is decoded. 'If he had read Lombroso', suggests Baker – and the lawyer is credited with a physiognomic gaze by Van Helsing – 'Harker would have been able to identify the Count's true nature' (p.211). The signification of criminality and degeneration suppressed at the beginning of the novel eventually surfaces, but in the consciousness of Mina rather than Harker, confirmation that she is the reader of signs *par excellence* in the novel: 'The Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind' (p.342). Bearing in mind the discussion of *Jekyll and Hyde*, this is more than can be said about Hyde to the extent that he escapes the economy of the gaze. It is ironic that the demonic or supernatural entity proves to be the less radical figure of the two. Indeed, the creation of Hyde is ultimately a mystery to Jekyll. When he refreshes his supply of salt, he is unable to manufacture the drug and attributes his former success to an impurity. There is no known chemical formula for Hyde, who ultimately remains beyond scientific understanding.

# Conclusion

As this study has shown, the gaze is of central importance to the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic; importance that can be accounted for by contextualising it both in terms of the power of the specular and visual modernity, including the birth of cinema with which I would like to conclude. According to Brian Coe, 'By the middle of the 1880s everything was ready for the appearance of cinematography'.[1] This was when the second wave of the Gothic was ushered in with the publication of *Jekyll and Hyde*. Prawer writes that,

> A careful reading of Stevenson's story confirms that there was such a thing as the cinematic imagination before there was a cinema: his externalization of an inner conflict in the shape of Jekyll-and-Hyde, his description of Utterson's mode of dreaming and apprehending, are cases in point. (p.105)

A parallel was also suggested between Dorian's changing picture and early cinematic technology. The idea of the living portrait, the fact that it changes or moves, and the descriptions of the spectator Dorian viewing the picture, a kind of screen onto which his transgressions are projected, are further examples of this 'cinematic imagination' at work. Tom Gunning has identified 'a basic aesthetic of early cinema' he calls '"the cinema of attractions", which envisioned cinema as a series of visual shocks'.[2] According to Gunning:

> This aesthetic so contrasts with prevailing turn-of-the-century norms of artistic reception – the ideals of detached contemplation – that it nearly constitutes an anti-aesthetic. [...] These early films explicitly acknowledge their spectator, seeming to reach outwards and confront. Contemplative absorption is

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[1] Coe continues, 'The wide publicity given to the work of Muybridge and Marey, the great interest of the public in the latest developments in science and technology and the availability of the new, faster gelatin-based photographic materials all contributed to the inspiration of the inventor. The most significant factor of all was the introduction of a flexible paper roll film by George Eastman in 1885, which provided a useful experimental material for the productions of sequences of pictures', *The History of Movie Photography* (London: Ash & Grant, 1981), p. 54. All further references will be given in the body of the text.

[2] 'An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and The (In)Credulous Spectator', *Art and Text*, 34 (1989), p. 33.

> impossible here. The viewer's curiosity is aroused and fulfilled through a marked encounter, a direct stimulus, a succession of shocks. (p.38)

In *Suspensions of Perception*, Crary challenges the emphasis on 'shock' and 'dispersal' characterizing perception from the mid-nineteenth century on. Crary posits that modern distraction needs to be understood 'through its reciprocal relation to the rise of attentive norms and practices' (p.1). Examining how ideas about perception and attention were transformed in the late nineteenth century, Crary studies 'a generalized crisis in perception in the 1880s and 1890s' in which 'the contested notion of attention was central to a range of social, philosophical, and aesthetic issues during those years' (p.2). According to Jay, 'The widespread dissemination of new visual experiences brought about by social as well as technological changes had introduced uncertainties about the truths and illusions conveyed by the eyes' leading to a 'fully-fledged critique of vision' in the twentieth century (p.355). This crisis in visual objectivity, a problematised relationship between the 'visible' and the 'real', is a key theme in the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic. The protagonists observe indefinable monstrous bodies and encounter self-reflections and portraits which stretch their belief in what they are seeing.

As cited in the introduction, Daly refers 'to the extensive set of late Victorian tales that dwell on the existence of "dead" things that have a life of their own – vampires, mummies, portraits', and suggests that their appearance at this time is no coincidence. Whilst vampires and portraits are discussed at length in this thesis, the scope does not extend to 'mummies'. Indeed, Stoker's *Jewel of the Seven Stars* would prove a fruitful text in order to elaborate on the gaze, in conjunction with *The Beetle* and 'Mummy' stories, specifically, Egyptian Romances. Influenced by *Jekyll and Hyde*, Walter De la Mare's *The Return* (1910) offers a more domestic account of 'possession'. The protagonist falls asleep

beside the grave of one Nicholas Sabathier, whose face he wakes up with and I conclude with this quotation from the novel:

> He sat there and it seemed to him his body was transparent as glass. It seemed he had no body at all – only the memory of an hallucinatory reflection in the glass, and this inward voice [...]. He rose once more and leaned between the two long candle-flames, and stared on – on – on, into the glass.[3]

[3] Walter de la Mare, *The Return* (1910) (London: Collins, 1923), p. 13.

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